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DIRT ACTION

ISSUE 201 - MAR 2016

Toby Price **DAKAR CHAMPION!**

**A DAY IN
THE LIFE OF
CHAD REED**

**JAY MARMONT ON
RETIREMENT:
THE FIRE INSIDE**

**TRAIL TESTING THE
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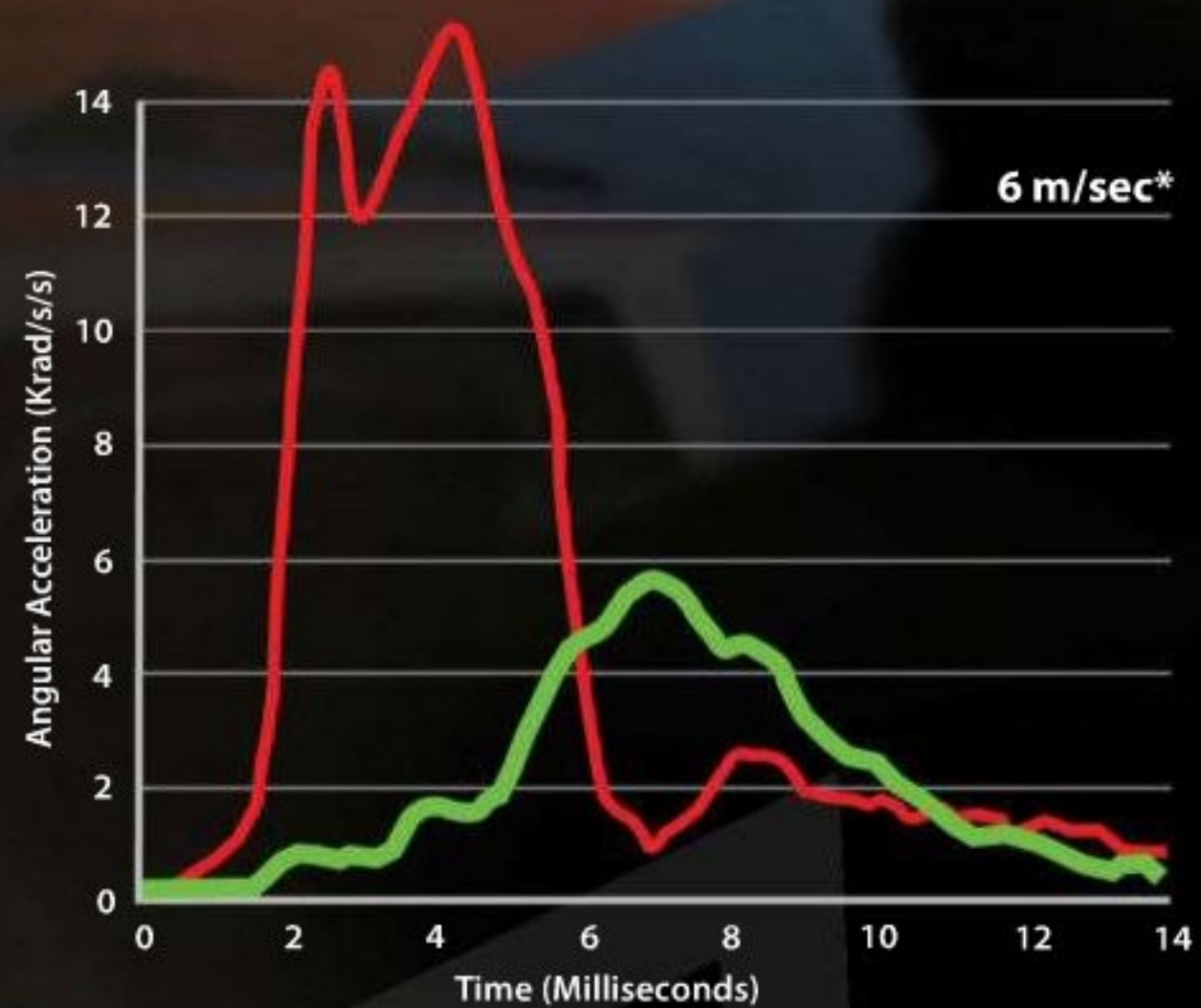
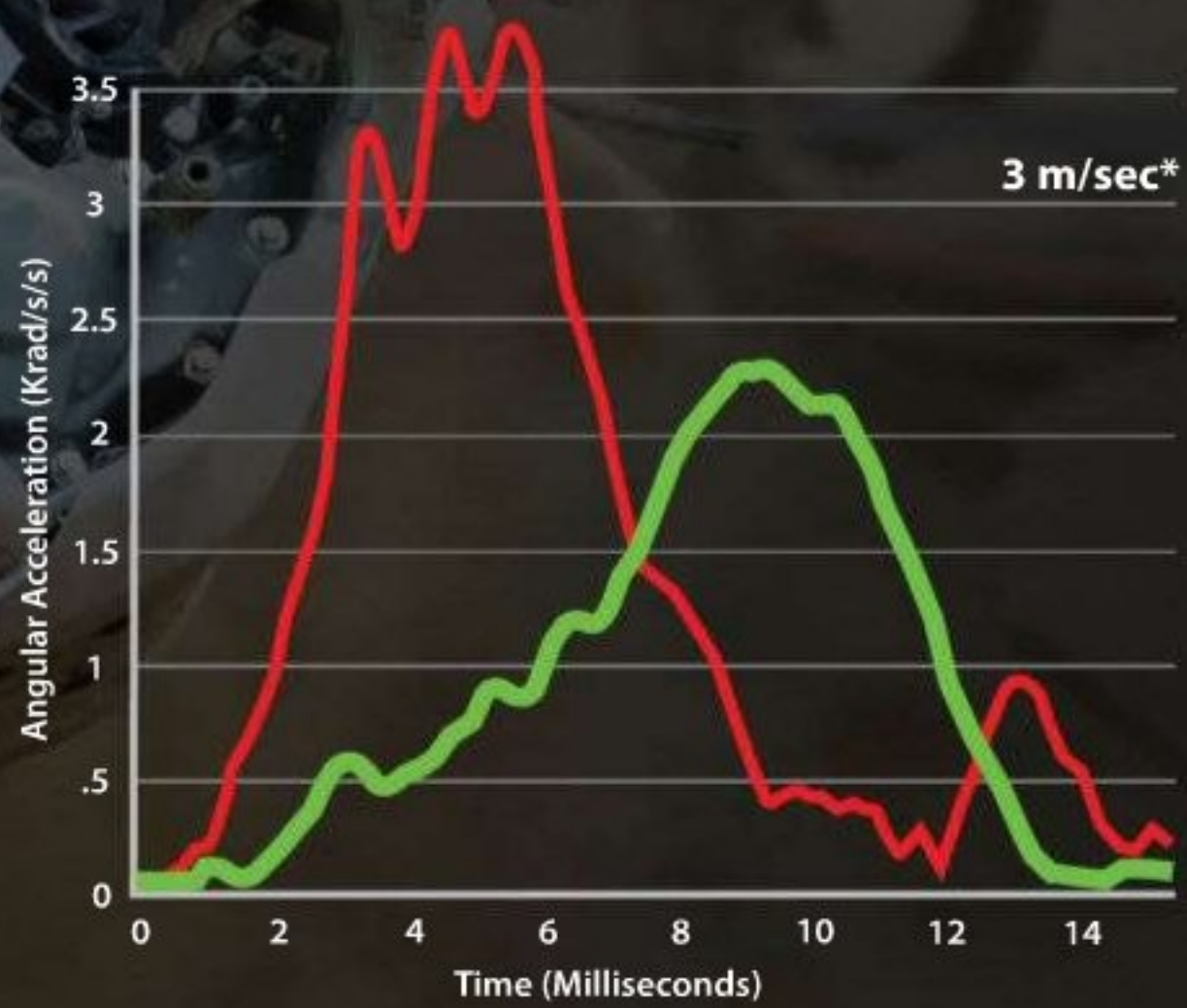
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PROJECT BIKES

Yamaha YZ125



ON THE COVER

2016 DAKAR WINNER - TOBY PRICE

PHOTO - REDBULL



ED'S LETTER:

with Damien Ashenhurst

FOLLOW



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UPS AND DOWNS

Wow... what a month for moto. What a few months for moto, actually. I'm not sure where to start but what better place than Toby Price winning Dakar. I've seen Toby ride at Finke ever since his first win at his first attempt, and seeing that guy ride the desert is one of the memories I'll take with me when I move on from editor of a bike mag. His last win, which came after a stick went through his boot and busted his foot, was epic and underlines just how driven he is to succeed and do all the thousands of big and little things to make that happen and keep happening.

It was great to see the mainstream media pick up on the race and give it some support. Some were quicker than others but pretty much everyone was there in the end and we certainly heard plenty about it after the fact – especially where I live in Newcastle. Newy loves its sportingsuccess stories and with a roster featuring Chad Reed, Casey Stoner, Craig Anderson, Mark Richards, Andrew Johns, Doug Walters and on and on it goes, Toby Price is in quality company.

If there's a downside to Toby's win, it's through the irony of Motorcycling Australia (MA) losing its funding via the Australian Sports Commission (ASC). This now means that the all-conquering ISDE teams of which Toby has long been a member (except 2015) can't defend their clean sweep of titles.

MA can no longer afford to fund the ISDE or MXoN teams and the ASC scrambles to find piles upon piles of money to fund the Olympic team to obscene and impractical levels. Let me give you an example of just how much money we're talking about. According

to figures in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the 2012 London Olympics cost Australia \$310 million. To send a team to both the ISDE and MXoN would cost about \$250,000 or less.

In those 2012 Olympics, table tennis received funding to the tune of \$1.2 million. I don't know how expensive top-end ping pong paddles are but that seems over the top. But that's nothing compared to, say, canoeing (\$14.6 million), basketball (\$23.7 million) or the king of kings with swimming, which cost an insane \$38.8 million and returned one gold medal in a relay race. This was Australia's worst Olympics in 20 years and the reason often cited by managers and coaches? We didn't spend enough money. Right... There was enough in that budget for the male swimmers to buy Stilnox and piss a massive slice of the \$38 million down the pool drain.

The quote in the *SMH* article that gets me is this: "The institute and the Australian Sports Commission classify sports in tiers based on factors such as participation, governance, medal potential and cultural relevance."

By those measures, how in the hell does moto get screwed at its most successful point and fencing continues to be funded? Are there really more fencers than dirtbike riders? I'll bet my old dog that moto means more and gives more to the country than synchronised swimming, too!

Motorcycles have given us winners and world champions in numbers that are recognised around the world as heroes and legends, but here our Sports Commission sees them as third-tier low priorities. I'm not downplaying the relevance of any other sport here but as

the ASC is making a judgment call against moto then I'll do the same against the sports that receive favourable funding. A true Sports Commission would see what the ISDE teams have done and make sure it does everything it could to get them back to defend such a brilliant effort.

MA has a role to play here and, as yet, it's hard to see why we would trust it to do the right thing. It's been too long since it was a transparent and honest body. We had an argument with MA after we designed and funded some clothing for the MXoN team one year (because MA wouldn't) and dealing with MA on that level was mind-blowing. It went to the top and at the top it was scariest of all.

And, to be honest, some of the riders need to look at themselves after some of the behaviour in front of officials at the end of the ISDE (let alone the AORC presentation). I can't throw a stone at the swimmers without mentioning that getting pissed and trashing places under the MA dollar is not on. It's a sure way to lose support from bureaucracy.

MA is now asking riders to self-fund as the only means to get to the international events. This isn't a decision MA made – it was forced upon the group by the ASC – but to expect riders to find enough money to get to Spain for the ISDE or Italy for the MXoN with their race bike is so pointless it's laughable. These guys don't make that kind of money.

So, as much of a downer as this fact is, we can still just rewatch and take in Toby Price's epic ride to feel better about moto in Oz. His career has taken a new turn and his future is in rally on the biggest stage for the most powerful team. Congrats, Toby. You deserve it all for having the talent and balls. **DA**

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Active8 Yamaha's Josh Green pushes some Alice Springs sand aside on the 2016 WR450F.

PHOTO BY DAMIEN ASHENHURST





STRANGY STAYS ON HUSKY

THE AUSSIE OFF-ROAD WEAPON LOOKS TO TAKE HIS FC TO THE TOP

Aussie Josh Strang has penned a deal with the Rockstar Energy Husqvarna Factory off-road team in the US aboard an FC 450. Strang moved to the Husky team in 2015 and carded some excellent results, eventually finishing third overall in the GNCC series. Strang's team mates include the great Mike Brown and the guy that can nail an epic 360 (YouTube that) in Colton Haaker, as well as Andrew Delong and Jacob Argubright. Tim Weigand is the team manager.



BARCIA OUT INDEFINITELY

BAM BAM BARCIA BOUNCED BY A BUSTED THUMB

Justin Barcia went into the 2016 AMA Supercross series as one of the names many expected to see up the front. The first round saw the JGR Yamaha rider get a good start but fade backwards during the final like he'd dropped four anchors. As it turns out, the bearded Bam Bam Barcia was carrying an injury that will see him out of racing indefinitely. It all happened during a mountain bike ride pre-season when Barcia suffered a tear to the ulnar collateral ligament in his thumb, causing intense pain. Barcia stated in an Instagram post, "I injured my hand the week before A1 and will undergo surgery this week ... It's a tough pill to swallow with how hard I worked this year and was ready to be in the mix for race wins. I tried to race but it's just not realistic with how bad the pain is."

It was a tough start to the season for the Yamaha crew, with Barcia bowing out and Autotrader.com/Monster Energy/Toyota Yamaha's Weston Peick tossing his toys out the pram and beating on Vince Friese mid-race, which led to a suspension and hefty fine. All this made Chad Reed's debut on a Yamaha all the better, mind you, as the veteran stayed out of trouble and only took two races to land a podium spot.

Peick later issued an apology: "While I have had some time to absorb my actions of this past Saturday night, I felt it was important to apologise for the way I handled myself in the heat of battle. I must admit, I have been overwhelmed by the support I have received, but we know the race track is meant for just that — a place to race our motorcycles."



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If adventure is your middle name, your parents probably didn't like you. But if it's your middle name just metaphorically speaking, you need to check out the Touratech Adventure Challenge. Taking place in the beautiful town of Bright, Victoria, on March 19, the event is a chance to take on an array of skills-based challenges throughout the day to see if you can make your way through to the finals. Alternatively, it's a perfect chance to have a look at and actually ride a test bike from Aprilia, BMW, Honda, KTM, Suzuki, Triumph or Yamaha.

This sounds like a great event held in good spirit and in a great part of the world. Take our advice and taste some of the amazing beers at the Bright Brewery. For more info, go to touratech.com.au — we may just see you at the event.

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12pm - 5pm: Displays open and test rides commence

12pm - 4pm: Touratech Adventure Challenge registration open

SATURDAY, MARCH 19

7.30am: START Challengers briefing and Adventure Challenge begins

9.00am: Displays open and test rides commence

3.00pm: FINISH Adventure Challenge. Competitors return to Pioneer Park

4.30pm: Test rides finish

4.30 - 6.30pm: Touratech Adventure Challenge Finals

7.30 - 8.30pm: The day's video footage and photos screened

8pm onwards: Presentations and thanks. Replay video and photos

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GOING OFF TOBY PRICE, HE IS NOW THE OUTRIGHT LEADER OF THE DAKAR RALLY. KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK MATE.

SHANNON NOLL

"Amazing. Toby Price is about to become an Australian sporting hero and most sporting writers don't seem to know. Look a bit wider, boys." - **WILL HAGON**

I JUST CAN'T NOT MAKE THE MOTO NOISE, EVEN WHEN RIDING! I ALWAYS FEEL LIKE A KID ON MY DIRTBIKE.

JEREMY MCGRATH

"Webb is making sexy time to this track." - **STEVE MATTHES**

“When I grow up, I wanna throw nac nacs with the kids like @jeremymcgrath.”

CHAD REED

I'm not saying that @westonpeick should throw punches, but I am saying that the @fs1 coverage showed @vincefrieze riding like an idiot at least four [times] last night. Fading over triples, and in rhythm sections on @deanwilson15 and twice on @westonpeick. Most pros on the track have experienced what I'm talking about. **KEVIN WINDHAM**

I'VE BEEN ON THIS BIKE JUST OVER [A] WEEK AND [AM] TOTALLY LOVING IT. #KX450 KAWASAKI. - **ELI TOMAC**

WELL UNFORTUNATELY MY SEASON HAS COME TO A QUICK END. I INJURED MY HAND THE WEEK BEFORE A1 AND WILL UNDERGO SURGERY THIS WEEK. IT'S A TOUGH PILL TO SWALLOW WITH HOW HARD I WORKED THIS YEAR AND WAS READY TO BE IN THE MIX FOR RACE WINS I TRIED TO RACE, BUT IT'S JUST NOT REALISTIC WITH HOW BAD THE PAIN IS. THANKS TO MY TEAM, FAMILY, FANS AND EVERYONE THAT HAS STUCK BEHIND ME.

I WILL BE BACK ASAP! - **JUSTIN BARCIA**

I'm glad @CRtwo two put his book on hold for now since he's too busy doing legend shit and still writing new chapters anyway. **DMXS RADIO**



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SCOTT BISHOP

BIO:

Scott Bishop is the most experienced dirtbike test dummy in Australia and perhaps the world. He's tested everything that's won, lost, blew up, blew smoke, holed out or high-sided since DIRT ACTION began. These days Scott runs the GYTR Yamaha Yamalube race team in the MXD class and spends his time building bikes and riders.

FOLLOW

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Times have changed – or have they?

A lot has changed in racing in the last 200 issues of DIRT ACTION, some for the better and some for the worse. There has also been situations where next to nothing has changed over the same period of time. That's the evolution of our sport.

Recently, a bunch of us old-timers sat around and chatted about motocross and supercross in the '80s and '90s and how much different the landscape is from today. The '80s and '90s were a very successful period and a lot of the people involved then are still directly involved with the sport now in many different ways. Some of us are extremely lucky to earn a living from what is still a hobby.

My early racing days when I was a senior were spent in a train of HiAce vans travelling to a race, any race, around Australia. If there was a race on, you busted your nut to get there and we were doing 35 events per year. You and two mates loaded up a van to the roof with a bike each, a tool box, a tent, a couple of chairs and a fuel can and away you went. And it was some of the best times riders of that generation would have had. Every rider did it, regardless of the team or support you got. Glenn Bell or Craig Dack might have been in the car in front of you.

There were no flights, no airports and no rental cars, just 15 HiAce vans barreling down a highway, usually with someone's bare arse hanging out the window, chain lube being sprayed over following vans and a heap of tape from a cassette wrapping itself around the fleet. Those were good times and something

the current generation misses. None of us raced for money back then; we raced from passion and the friendships formed last a lifetime.

I recall going to Canberra every year where most riders entered just to stack up on a year's supply of fireworks and porn. You would roll into Fyshwick at some crazy hour of the night thinking no one would see you, only to pull up at the fireworks and porn shop and see about 130 vans parked out front. The race meeting could have held rider briefings in that shop and no one would have missed out.

There was the supercross series in North Queensland, which always turned into a month-long party in the middle of the year. Events in Mackay, Townsville, Cairns and Rockhampton would see everyone travel there together, stay at the same motels and hang out. Press day was always Thursday at 11am so from then until Saturday night when the main event finished, it was all business. Then it was a race to the nearest night club for the party to start. And it wasn't pills and illegal drugs, it was a few beers and a good time.

I remember doing a 5am nude ride in the sand dunes of WA on the way home from Manjimup. For some strange reason, a heap of us pulled into the sand dunes, unloaded bikes and starting riding at 5am. By the time the rangers got there, most of us were nude apart from helmets and boots. It was pretty odd standing there in a line up when the tourists starting rolling in.

I recall the aggression on the track but it rarely spilling over into the pits. In fact, most of the time, the rider you cleaned out, or whom cleaned you out, had to get in the same car as you when you travelled home. And there were some huge take outs. McFarlane put Byrne into a dam at Tivoli – and they were living together at the time. Micky Cook and McFarlane got into a T-boning match at Gosford, of which neither rider finished the race but were team mates the following year. You stood your ground on the track and then laughed it off when you returned.

We were a supercross nation racing up to 29 supercross events per year, all with prize money. No one was getting rich but you could earn money week to week and keep yourself on the road and going from race to race. Promoters would assist in motel bills around the event and when that couldn't happen, everyone would stay at a fellow rider's house.

As we were discussing all this I looked out over the Bathurst Showgrounds. The lights were on but the track was dark and full of shadows. It was cold and wet and it suddenly felt like it was 1989 again as we had raced an event there that was exactly the same all those years ago. Ronnie McFarlane was standing to my right – still with the same amount of hair as 1989 (none) – Brad McAlpine was cracking some odd joke that takes 10 minutes to understand and Graham "checkers" Stewart was going crazy on the finish line as Gary Been walked past holding a clip board. Some things never change... 

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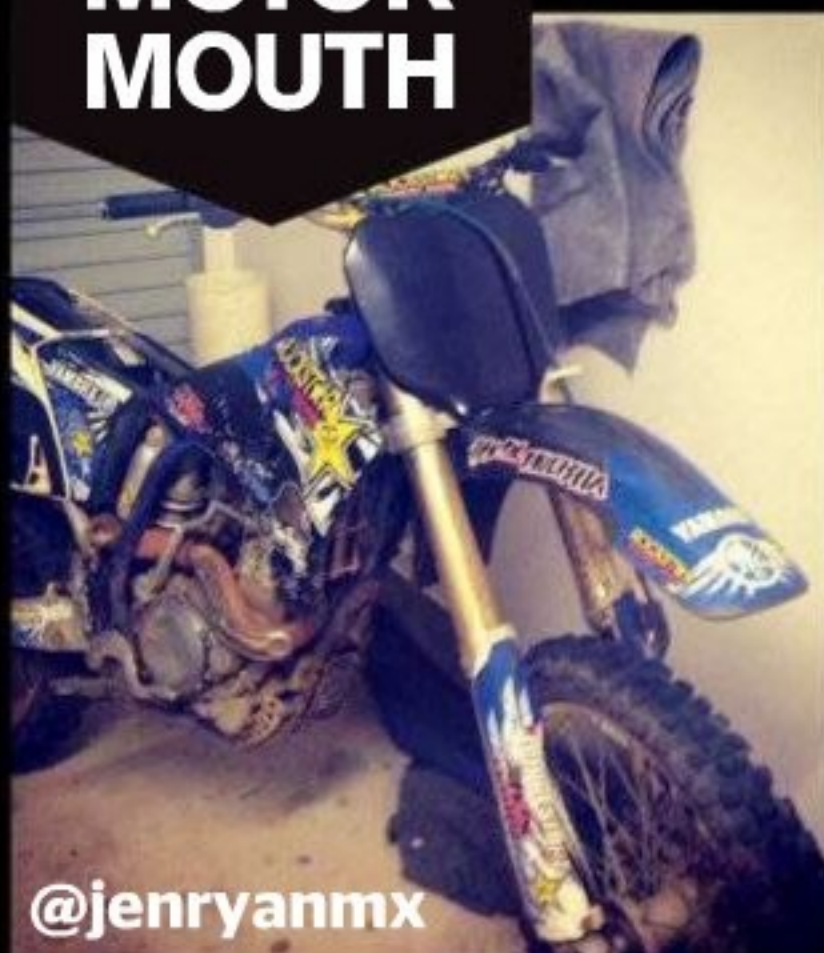
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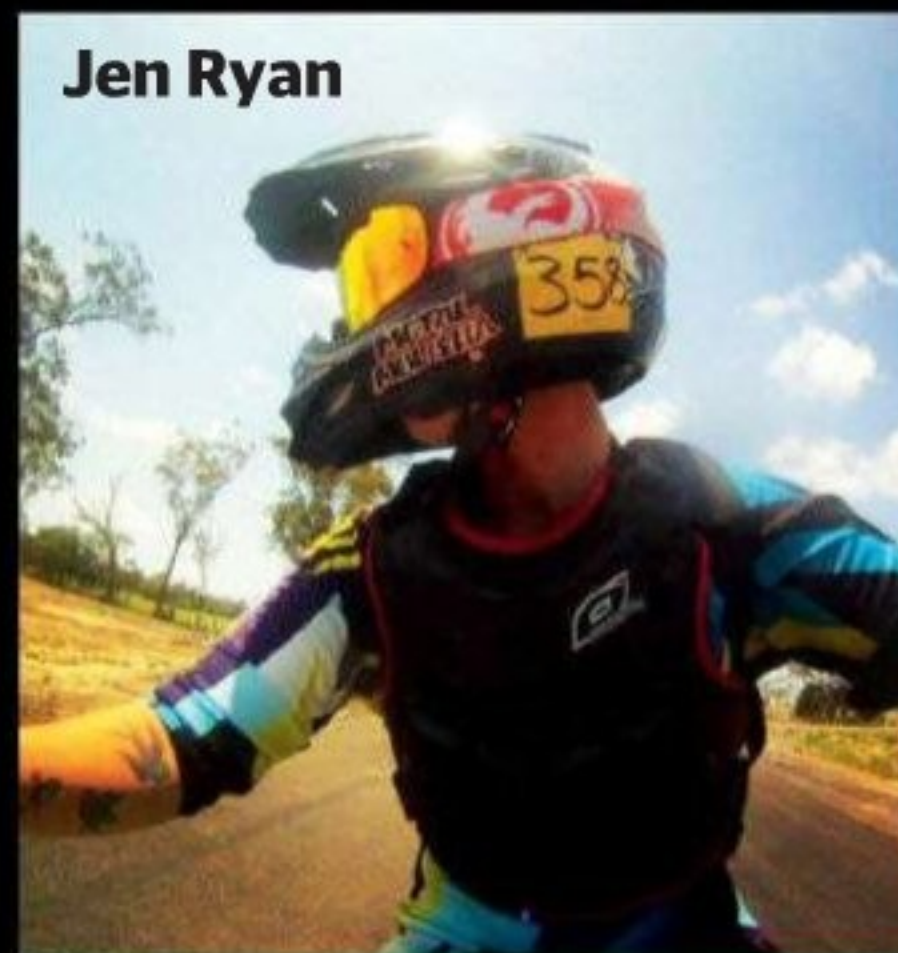


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2014 BMW GS Safari



DPH MIXES IT UP A LITTLE

**ONE MAN LEAVES AND
ANOTHER ENTERS**



**ALTHOUGH HE'S OFTEN
OVERLOOKED AS A TOP-LINE RIDER,
BOPPING HAS PUT DOWN SOME
AMAZING RESULTS RECENTLY**

DPH Motorsport has announced that Lawson Bopping and former Serco Yamaha rider Jed Beaton will spearhead the team's efforts in the MX Nats through 2016. Wayde Hunter will swap places with Beaton and head to the Serco Yamaha team, which has lost Luke Clout to a short-term Suzuki team in the States.

Twenty-one-year-old female rider Maddy Brown will also line-up for DPH and will be looking to continue her winning ways with the team.

Although he's often overlooked as a top-line rider, Bopping has put down some amazing results recently – few more impressive than battling Townley at Cooloom or his excellent showing at supercross, followed by qualifying for the main event in the US. We're big fans of Boppo at DA and his followers will be stoked to see the return to Conondale this year because Lawson hits that extension early and all day – it's awesome to watch.

In other team news, the new Factory Honda MX team will feature Dylan Long and Jay Wilson, which could very well herald the return of the title-winning days not seen since Ando crossed the line as number one in 2006.

Kade Mosig might feel a little hard done by being squeezed out of the CDR Yamaha team after a strong 2015, but he's found a home in MX1 next to Matt Moss in the NPS Monster Energy Kawasaki team, which will also feature Jake Moss competing in the MX2 class. At the time of writing, Adam Monea, who finished the 2015 season in third for Kawasaki, was yet to find a ride.

Another rider that was previously with CDR Yamaha but has now found a new home is Jacob Wright. Wright will be lining up for the SD3 Husqvarna team alongside Luke Arbon and if he can recapture his form pre-injury, he will be a force to be reckoned with.

A DATE WITH DIRT

**THE MX NATS SET TO DROP THE GATE IN APRIL FOR
ANOTHER BIG YEAR OUTDOORS**

WEM has released the 2016 MX Nationals calendar, which features plenty of familiar tracks and a return to a couple of old favourites in Murray Bridge and Conondale.

It's a packed program this year with MX1, MX2 and MXD headlining, with brilliant support from the 85cc Cup, the Rising Star Rookies, Vets (30-39 and 40+) and the Australian Women's Motocross Championship.

The MX Nats always puts on a brilliant meet and the racing in 2016 is sure to be epic. This year sees team changes for Matt Moss, Dylan Long and Jay Wilson just to name a few. Plus, of course, the return of Todd Waters and Dean Ferris.

2016 MX Nationals Championship calendar:

ROUND 1: April 3 – Horsham, Vic (Classes MX1, MX2, MXD and 85cc Cup)

ROUND 2: April 17 – Appin, NSW (Classes MX1, MX2, MXD and Rising Star Rookies)

ROUND 3: May 1 – Broadford, Vic (Classes MX1, MX2, MXD and Amateur Cup)

ROUND 4: May 22 – Murray Bridge, SA (Classes MX1, MX2, MXD and 85cc Cup)

ROUND 5: May 29 – Wanneroo, WA (Classes MX1, MX2 and C Grade Lites)

ROUND 6: July 3 – Nowra, NSW (Classes MX1, MX2, MXD and Amateur Cup)

ROUND 7: July 17 – Conondale, Qld (Classes MX1, MX2, MXD and Vets – both classes)

ROUND 8: July 31 – Shepparton, Vic (Classes MX1, MX2, MXD and Rising Star Rookies)

ROUND 9: August 21 – Toowoomba, Qld (Classes MX1, MX2, MXD and Amateur Cup)

ROUND 10: August 28 – Cooloom, Qld (Classes MX1, MX2, MXD, Rising Star Rookies, 85cc Cup, Australian Women's MX Championship)

**It's a packed
program this year
with MX1, MX2 and
MXD headlining, with
brilliant support
from the 85cc
Cup, the Rising
Star Rookies, Vets
(30-39 and 40+)
and the Australian
Women's Motocross
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WEATHER BEATS BAYLISS

MOTO GODS DAMPEN A DAY AT THE TRACK

The weather this summer has been crap in many parts of Oz and even the might of Troy Bayliss couldn't keep the rains at bay when the gate dropped on the Motul Pirelli Troy Bayliss Classic in Taree, NSW.

Around 5000 spectators made the trip to the newly surfaced Taree Motorcycle Club to catch all classes blast through three rounds each of racing before the rains came and the fun stopped. "It was a great day considering the conditions," said Bayliss. "We got through all the heat races but it was disappointing that we were not able to run the final few events. I would have chopped off my other pinky to have run the Americana, Superpole and Troy Bayliss Classic final but, unfortunately, it wasn't to be."

All efforts will now be put towards the 2017 event, with the club offering excellent facilities and continuing to build on the name the race has garnered since its inception.

TROY BAYLISS CLASSIC BEST TIME

Luke Richards - 21.725
Jake Johnson - 21.738
Robbie Menzies - 21.748
Troy Herfoss - 21.771
Jared Mees - 21.887
Michael Kirkness - 21.906
Troy Bayliss - 21.941
Sammy Halbert - 22.000
Brad Baker - 22.057
Jarred Brook - 22.136

"WE GOT THROUGH ALL THE HEAT RACES BUT IT WAS DISAPPOINTING THAT WE WERE NOT ABLE TO RUN THE FINAL FEW EVENTS"

BIKE SALES STEADY

HONDA VS YAMAHA WAR CONTINUES



Figures released by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries show that bike sales held reasonably steady through 2015, with the overall sales win going to Honda ahead of Yamaha, Kawasaki and then Suzuki.

Thirty-five per cent of all bikes sold were off-road machines. Yamaha topped the sales tally in dirtbikes with 12,048 bikes sold, followed by Honda, KTM, Suzuki and Kawasaki.

5. Kawasaki	KX450F	574
6. Kawasaki	KX250F	551
7. KTM	50 SX	485
8. Yamaha	YZ250	434
9. KTM	85 SX	393
10. KTM	65 SX	387

ENDURO TOP 10 (JAN-DEC 2015):

1. Yamaha	WR450F	1185
2. Suzuki	DR-Z400E	868
3. KTM	500 EXC	670
4. KTM	350 EXC-F	634
5. KTM	300 EXC	585
6. Yamaha	WR250F	474
7. KTM	450 EXC	402
8. Yamaha	WR250R	270
9. Husqvarna	TE300	266
10. Kawasaki	KLX250S	254

MOTOCROSS TOP 10 (JAN-DEC 2015):

1. Yamaha	YZ250F	969
2. Yamaha	YZ450F	868
3. Honda	CRF450R	862
4. Honda	CRF250R	842

TOWNLEY HEADS TO SPAIN

BEN BOLTS TO BENICÀSSIM

Kiwi Ben Townley has made a solid start to testing with his new team in Europe. The veteran signed on for 2016 with Suzuki World MXGP in what was to most a surprise return to full-time racing. With the team now managed by the great Stefan Everts, Townley and teammates Kevin Strijbos and Bas Vaessen have been testing in Benicàssim, Spain.

"The team has been training here for a week now and it's great that I can join them," said Townley. "I like being able to ride with my teammates. I've known Kevin since my first year in Europe and we get along fine, and this is also a great chance to get to know the younger guys."

Everts himself said of Townley's arrival: "I'm happy that he has made the trip already and now he has the time to acclimatise to the colder weather and the time difference. Ben is in great shape and ready to train with his teammates on the same rhythm."



MCCOY DOWN

DMC injured in Arenacross – the world's whip quality drops while he's out

Dan McCoy was seriously hurt while competing in an Arenacross event in the UK for the MVR-D Husqvarna team. The 31-year-old suffered damage to his spine and underwent surgery to relocate his T11 and T12 vertebrae with screws and rods and, as his Instagram post mentions, had some bone grafting done as well. At the time of writing, DMC was making progress in his recovery. We wish him the best and can't wait to see him back on a bike sometime soon throwing the sickest of whips.



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2: USWE XC HYDROPACK 2.0L

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4



3

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3: BELL SUPER 24 360FLY HELMET

This new smart helmet with 360fly offers 360° video capture in 4K. A conventional 16x9 video can also be captured for regular playback, while an intuitive interface allows easy mobile editing and sharing through 360fly's proprietary mobile app.

The camera has been integrated low into the helmet, maximising field of view while not affecting ventilation or

impact protection. Bluetooth and Wi-Fi compatible, the camera has a two-hour battery life and can be removed from the helmet as desired.

While the Bell Super 24 helmet has been designed for mountain biking, BRG Sports has announced three other helmets that will utilise cameras for other sports. The Bell Star 360fly full-face motorcycle helmet is designed for road motorsports, while the Bell Moto 9 Flex with 360fly is aimed at off-road motorcyclists.

4: 2016 ALPINESTARS A1 TECH 10 BOOTS

- The special-edition Tech 10 boot is CE certified, released in conjunction with Anaheim 1
- Innovative and lightweight design
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- Dual-closure system



- Contoured TPU calf protector
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- RRP \$699.95

5: THOR MX CORE HUXLE RACEWEAR JERSEY (YELLOW/NAVY)

- Increased comfort and performance
- Large mesh panels for ventilation
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6: PANTS (RED/CYAN)

- Aramid stitching around leather knee panels
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- Hidden inner-hip pocket

7: PRO CIRCUIT T-6 PRO SYSTEM

The T-6 Pro system is built using a titanium silencer and carbon end cap, with a stainless-steel mid pipe. The T-6 Pro meets the MA/FIM 2-Meter Max sound test without the need of a performance-killing insert and is used by factory teams all over the world.

FEATURES INCLUDE:

- 2-Metre Max sound-test approved
- Titanium canister construction
- Carbon-fibre end cap
- Stainless-steel mid and head pipes
- Equipped with RC-4 resonance chamber
- Machined aluminium silencer bracket(s)
- Asymmetrical silencer configuration for increased packing volume
- Machined mid pipe to head pipe joint for a better, leak-free fit
- Removable, USFS-approved spark arrestor
- TIG precision welding
- Made in the USA
- RRP \$124.95

GAME





In 1998, I rode the WR400F and thought, "Holy shit... this thing is good for a four-stroke." But it didn't sway me from my two-stroke. In 2001, I rode the WR426F and thought, "Holy shit... this thing is powerful." But I liked my two-stroke more (actually I liked the 400 more, too). But then, in 2003, I rode the WR450F and I was hooked.

It's amazing to think that even by the third iteration no other manufacturer had anything to throw out against the WR-F and that bike would serve until 2007 when the aluminium frame arrived. The CRF450X was roaming the earth by this stage and ran an arguably better suspension set-up, certainly better forks, but the sales juggernaut of the WR-F just rolled on. It was another four years before significant updates – during which time the Global Financial Crisis had arrived, KTM's 450EXC had asserted its performance dominance, Honda faded through neglect from Japan and Suzuki's RMX 450 waited all too quietly for ADR compliance.

The 2012 WR450F divided people. It was too heavy to be an effective race bike and it copped scorn on the Internet (imagine that) for that very reason. The criticism was warranted to a degree but it went too far. The 2012 was a good trail bike with a great engine, familiar ergos and finally a set of forks that could hold their own. Yamaha Australia didn't get it all their own way with the design of the bike and the compromises were what were to be later blamed for its undoing. But it sold well. Plenty of blokes that bothered to ride it loved it and, really, that's what it's all about.

It says something about the WR-F's standing in Australia that if the public perceives it as subpar, then they shout it to the heavens in all caps. It kind of feels like it's our bike.

And now, once again, we have a new WR450F. One that Yamaha believes is every bit as relevant and competitive as anything else on the market. It's based heavily on the YZ450F, which is an excellent platform that's proven a winner in motocross, Supercross and offroad. The development of the WR-F line has always been in good hands with guys such as Geoff Ballard at the helm and, for the 2016 model, Josh Coppins, who was brought in to add his insight. You may have heard of him... he goes pretty good.

COUNTRY CRUISIN'

The launch for the WR450F was held in the little Hunter Valley (NSW) town of Stroud and was based from a property owned by Active8 Yamaha rider Josh Green. Josh supervised the whole event and even set the two courses we had available to us over two days of riding. On day one we hit an epic grasstrack loop with some short bush trails for variety, while on day two we headed into the bush for some proper trailriding. I spoke to Josh early in the piece and he was already pumped on his short time on the new bike, which he'll ride in the 2016 season. Josh doesn't hold back if he doesn't like something and he tells it straight, so this wasn't just a team rider protecting his turf – he genuinely liked the bike and was keen to start getting it ready for racing.

A group of journos convened on the first night for the technical presentation and the feeling from the Yamaha guys was one of "just wait till you ride this thing".

THE 2012-BORN WR450F RECEIVED MORE THAN ITS FAIR SHARE OF CRITICISM, BUT THE 2016 MODEL IS HERE TO SLAY SOME DEMONS. CAN IT WIN RACES AND WIN FANS IN THE BUSH? WE SPENT TWO DAYS TRYING TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH.

STORY BY DAMIEN ASHENHURST PHOTOS BY GREG SMITH/IKAPTURE

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Add versatility to your WRF/YZF with the New 15L Safari fuel Tank. The oversized tank fits perfectly with standard radiator shrouds without restricting Airflow to the radiators or affecting the airbox.

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2014-2016 YZ450F

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IF THIS BIKE DOESN'T RAISE YOUR PULSE, YOU NEED TO SEE A DOCTOR

THE FIRST CRACK

The grasstrack Greeny had laid out was awesome. Fully bunted and ready to go, it had fast sections and tight sections that also weaved into the bush for some true single track.

I was one of the first guys suited up and on the bike. Adam Riemann was first, no surprises there.

Having ridden the YZ450F previously, the bike felt familiar. It's a unique feel via that sea/tank juncture but it's one that allows plenty of movement on the seat. In addition, throughout the ride I didn't get hooked up on any plastics.

The moment you hit the button, the stark reality that this bike has left the previous model behind is apparent. The reverse cylinder 2016 sounds completely different to the 2015 with a piercing induction sound and a more aggressive note from the pipe.

I rolled out onto the track and just took an easy lap to check it all out and then gave it what I had after that. The engine in the previous WR450F is excellent but this thing blows it out of the bush. There's the slightest

room for a linear build-up and then boom! Shit gets wild real quick. The engine releases a surge that's at once both explosive and tractable and goes well into the mid. It regathers so briefly there before you head into a mighty top-end. This engine will be remembered as one of the most exciting to ever grace a WR-F and in terms of power, if you need more, then you're more monster than man. In fact, just about everyone that took a spin on Dan Milner's bike, which just had a YZ-F pipe on it, thought it was way too much.

After a few laps, I made a couple of small adjustments to get my own personal feel and asked if we could try an engine map that settled the power a little. I've honestly never done that with a bike at a launch but the bush sections were tight and twisty and I was finding the front just constantly wanted to head skyward in the second-gear trails. Out came the Power Tuner, which plugs in just behind the headstock on the left-hand side, and in no time, I had a bike that delivered its thrust in a more measured way. It was only a slight adjustment but the difference made the effort worth it. Other guys came in and did the same thing and eventually we had a "Hollis Map" to try. It seems the multi-time champion was looking for a little less explosion as well. It's well known that Chris Hollis is one of the smoothest riders and prefers to keep a more constant throttle rather than ripping handfuls. He'll continue to refine the engine through testing with the CDR Yamaha team but his move to a less aggressive feel so early (most of the team riders hadn't ridden the bike till we did as well) says volumes about how much the WR450F has to throw down straight out of the crate. Another benefit was that it made it easier to sit in second gear. All WR-F owners will be familiar with that big jump from second to third and that's still present in the 2016. Primary gear ratio is the same as the 2016 YZ-F but the rest of the gearing mirrors the previous WR-F's.



WR450F TECHNICAL HIGHLIGHTS

- YZ450F-based 450cc liquid-cooled DOHC, fuel-injected 4-valve engine
- Revolutionary reverse cylinder head with front-facing intake
- Engine power is fully adjustable with optional Yamaha Power Tuner
- Wide ratio 5-speed transmission with light enduro clutch
- Efficient cooling by enduro radiator with cooling fan
- Top-mounted, quickly removable air filter
- YZF-based aluminium bilateral-beam frame with optimised rigidity balance
- Latest KYB® air-oil separation (AOS) type front forks
- Link-type Monocross suspension
- Main switch-free electric starter
- Instrument panel featuring enduro computer, fuel warning and more
- Metzeler 6 Days Extreme tyres



CHOOSE YOUR COLOUR

The WR450F is available in Racing Blue at the same RRP as the 2015 WR450F, \$12,999. And — unique to the AUS/NZ market — is also available in 60th Anniversary Yellow at \$13,199. Both colours will be available from January 2016 and customers are urged to place their orders at their local Yamaha dealer now to secure one of these desirable new models.

AROUND THE CORNER

All the power in the world is pointless unless you can ride it and that's where the suspension and chassis come into play. This bike is also 6kg lighter (claimed) than the previous model, which makes a huge difference. It's well known that the YZ450F is a bike with excellent handling characteristics and that translates nearly perfectly to the WR-F. The engine mounts are designed to give more flex and, of course, the suspension is tuned for offroad. But what makes the YZ-F great also makes the WR-F carve. The fork actually has 10mm more travel and is 2mm wider than the 2015 model WR-F, with refined settings but the same spring rate. The shock carries 19mm more travel than the 2015 and features a 56 spring instead of the 54 in the previous model.

It feels little like the WR250F in the front, which is to say it's not a loose/fast steering bike like a KTM, but at the same time it feels planted and gives plenty of feedback so you know exactly what's going on. As the bikes were brand new, it's impossible for us to give the definitive view here. The good news is that we took home a long-term project bike, so we'll know it front to back soon enough.



The bikes felt stiff at first, which is no surprise given they'd just climbed out of the crate, but as the launch wore on they started to loosen a little. I ran a faster action at the front and four clicks faster compression on the shock to battle the new feel and the 12-billion rocks on the trail ride, and I was pretty happy with that. But once bedded in, I reckon the stock settings would be pretty much on the money.

The bike handled the grasstrack easily — it just ate that up. Out in the bush, I found you could tip-toe around when needed or correct a turn you overcooked by just tipping it in more. It doesn't have an overtly light feel like a Sherco does but it feels incredibly stable at high speed, and watching the way Dan Milner rode it confirmed that it can take anyone from me to you and one of the world's best in stock trim. That couldn't be said for the previous model.

NAILED IT

Yamaha had some pressure on it for this one. The company got Josh Coppins on board and Yamaha Australia's Peter Payne, the man who has guided this

THE MOMENT YOU HIT THE BUTTON, THE STARK REALITY THAT THIS BIKE HAS LEFT THE PREVIOUS MODEL BEHIND IS APPARENT

model from the start, was there yet again. Yamaha had to make a new WR450F that was better than the last and see the model into a new era. And you know what? The brand did it. The base design of the YZ450F is brilliant and the way Josh Coppins measured out the changes and the Japanese saw them through is a credit to the process. This bike is better than the last one and with the way it throws gobs of horsepower down, it will be remembered by all those that buy one for years to come. It will be a force on the race tracks, from enduro to Finke and Hattah, but it will still meet the needs of the average rider.

We'd buy the Power Tuner along with the bike and spend some time getting the delivery just right. But if this bike doesn't raise your pulse, you need to see a doctor. **DAI**

THE OCEANIA CONNECTION

Yamaha Australia's Peter Payne has been instrumental in the existence and the development of the WR-F range since its inception. He recruited Josh Coppins to help refine the 2016 WR-F range and this is what both men had to say about the process.

PETER PAYNE

"The design platform was there many years ago. The GFC had an influence on everything at the factories, not just ours but all of them, and everything got slowed down or stopped. But the design platform for the YZ and WR 250 and 450 all came at the same time, which was quite a while ago. But because it's so resource heavy, you can't just put them all on the market and the market can't stand them all at once either.

The original parameters were always that the WR-F would come off the YZ-F. So the frame was a given, the engine design was a given; it was how it put the power to the ground, how it rode and handled that came down to fine tuning. We were given the basis of it and we had to get the engine right, the suspension right, the handling and the braking right.

Yamaha's 2016 WR450F project leader was the engine designer for the YZ450F from 2013, so he's been involved with the project for some time. The guy who's the project leader for the 250 had been involved with the previous WRs and YZs and these guys ride as well. You'll have a project leader, then engine designer, electronics designer, a chassis designer and then you'll have KYB as well. While these are all the lead guys, there are a lot of technicians underneath them."

JOSH COPPINS

"I started on the 250 first some time ago. My job's pretty easy; I just ride the bike and tell Pete what I feel. He puts that all onto paper and we work together with Japan and the other test riders and try to work out something that's comfortable for the market.

We start with one thing, so we'll target, say, the engine, and work on tractability and then we'll work on anything from tyres and gearing and basically go from one end of the bike through to the other and obviously having a YZ base made it pretty easy.

I'm pretty open-minded and I ride a lot of different disciplines in a lot of different conditions, and I've seen a lot of generations of riders and tracks so I have some experience. And I guess from my side, I try to think about all the customers and I try to feel the bike. And although it might be at a higher speed, you're still going to feel the same issues and I try to get them back to Pete in real terms as easily as possible. All I have to say to the technicians is 'this is what I feel'. They are skilled technicians, some of the best in the world, and they fix the problem and then I go back out and tell them if it's better or worse.

I have been involved with other factories at racing level and I would say that Yamaha does things a little bit more precise than most. "



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MOTONOMAD

STORY SHANE BOOTH PHOTOGRAPHY MATT BERNARD

WE CATCH UP WITH ADAM RIEMANN FOLLOWING HIS LATEST EPIC JOURNEY FROM ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN, TO ULAANBAATAR, MONGOLIA.

WHY THIS ROUTE FOR MOTONOMAD II?

Ever since *Himalayan Hero*, I had my heart set on doing something in the Himalayas again. I wanted to cross the Himalayas and punch on north into Tibet. The whole storyline was going to revolve around Tibet and I figured the start point would be Calcutta (Kolkata) in India and the end point Beijing in China. Just a perfect route and everything in between that would be huge. When I started looking into the logistics of trying to ride bikes into Tibet, it all just seemed pretty much impossible because of Chinese restrictions on being able to travel on your own bike and without a guide. It just got way too hard. I had to uproot that whole plan and to me that was the epic central Asia ride. I was looking at a map and I shifted my whole focus north. I spotted Mongolia and the word "Mongolia" brings thoughts of being so remote to me, it casts images of the end of the world. No one really knows anything about it, it's so off the grid. I kept the end point at Beijing and just had to swing the start point around so that I could get into

the guts of Mongolia. I did some research on it and it ended up being more fitting for *Motonomad* because it's the last true land of nomads, that's the way they live there. So it was all falling into place and I just needed a start point. Kazakhstan seemed like a real obscure, remote place to start. It warranted a bit of a journey to get to where we wanted to finish. So that's how the route came about.

DID THE LOGISTICS FOR THE START ALL COME TOGETHER AS PLANNED?

No. For starters, I thought I'd have it pretty sorted after the last *Motonomad* but in reality we had it easy. All we had to do then was fly into Austria with gear bags and hit the ground running with a couple of bikes that were prepared by the factory. And when I say prepared, I mean they were registered in Europe and they didn't need to be freighted there, it was just a case of get on and off we went. I dabbled with KTM about getting the factory to ship bikes to a dealer in Kazakhstan but, even then, trying to make all that happen was just like bashing your

head against the wall. KTM Australia, based on what I had already done with them, said, "We'll do it, we'll build the bikes in Australia and air freight them there." They funded it and gave all the parts and bits and pieces that I needed and it worked out a lot better than last time, where we got the couple of bikes and rode them out of the factory pretty much standard and had to adapt and customise stuff as we went. So to have the bikes in Australia and be able to build them up and fully customise them to take on the big distances was a benefit, but the logistics of getting them on an aeroplane and getting them through Kazakhstan customs and immigration process... it's bothering me just thinking about it again. You almost just throw your hands in the air and not even do the trip. It's funny how it all came together. It was a huge stress even just flying there and not knowing how it was all going to unfold because there is so much banking on it. You know, it was literally like, "Are they going to even let us legally ride these bikes in their country? If not, what then? The whole trip's over before it even begins." It's pretty funny



in the story how it all kicks off — one of our bike crates got squashed and you'll see it in the movie. Anyway, it was the biggest relief to finally get on the bikes and ride them away. Relief but stressful because it was straight into traffic in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on the other side of the road, just battling traffic in a foreign city.

HOW MUCH OF A MENTAL CHALLENGE ARE THESE JOURNEYS?

I guess the biggest stress for me is that there is a film production going on during the ride. All that aside, it's one of the greatest adventures you could ever have. It would be a hell of a lot easier if you didn't have to film it. The mental battle for me is that I have to deliver. It's turned into a lot more than me just going for a ride now. There is manufacturer involvement and, how can I say it, audience anticipation for the film. The act of actually riding the bike is second nature for me, thanks to my years of riding and racing, and that's what allows me to focus a lot on the production. To be honest, I don't give the riding a second thought. The stress comes from the camera gear and worrying about things such as "is it going to get confiscated at a border?" or something like that. Are the bikes going to get stolen in populated areas when you are forced into accommodation and you can't even see the bikes overnight? All that stuff is where the stress comes from.

WHERE WAS THE MOST REMOTE PLACE YOU SPENT A NIGHT?

There are probably a couple there. On the way down to the Gobi Desert was one. I have this theme of just riding to a visual point, and what I mean by that is areas that I want to film that I've found on Google Earth, irrespective of what services or access there is. That's the whole point of being on the 500EXCs. I know these destinations are there, they exist. Whether or not we can get to them by road or car really doesn't matter when you are on the 500EXC. There were a few nights in the middle of Kazakhstan heading north where there was nothing — we were roadside but just way out there. Similar to crossing the Nullarbor in Australia, you're just on nothing back roads and they're pot hole nightmares. The Gobi Desert is just big distances between anything. Having said that, even when you're that remote and that far away from anything, just when you think you couldn't possibly see another human being, there would be a tent set up and

Charyn Canyon, Kazakhstan. Day 2 proved to be the ultimate shakedown for the team as they tried to ride down into the canyon's river bed. It nearly cost them a rider.



The ends of the earth. An ancient house of prayer still standing, still occupied deep in the Mongolian Steppe.



Noble steeds. The Motonomad 500EXCs were modified for high-speed adventure with Riemann's custom-built Rally screens, stiffened suspension, taller gearing and Scott Britnell's custom saddlebag work.

there'd be a little family of nomads. We'd just ride up to the tent and before you know it, they'd invite us in and let us pitch our tents next to theirs. Mind you, they couldn't speak a single word of English. It was pretty cool.

WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST DAY?

I had a bit of an itinerary to make it to the Mongolian capital, Ulaanbaatar. When I say itinerary, it was really a deadline. I wanted to make it to the Naadam Festival from our start point in Kazakhstan. So we had a two-week window to do about 5500km. It sounds pretty easy but as soon as we hit Mongolia, most of it was off road. There are no highways; the road is just rutted and destroyed four-wheel-drive tracks that meander left and right. What would be a two-hour drive on an Australian freeway would be a two-day journey on a Mongolian

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one. One of the days leaving Kazakhstan to get to the Russian border we did 800km and on a 500 EXC in the heat, with potholes, dirt roads... we were zombies at the end of that. What allowed us to do that is the fact there is like 18 hours of daylight per day. And that really helped the film production, too, because the sun was rising at around 4:30am and setting no earlier than 10pm.

IS THERE A DAY THAT STANDS OUT AS THE TOUGHEST TERRAIN?

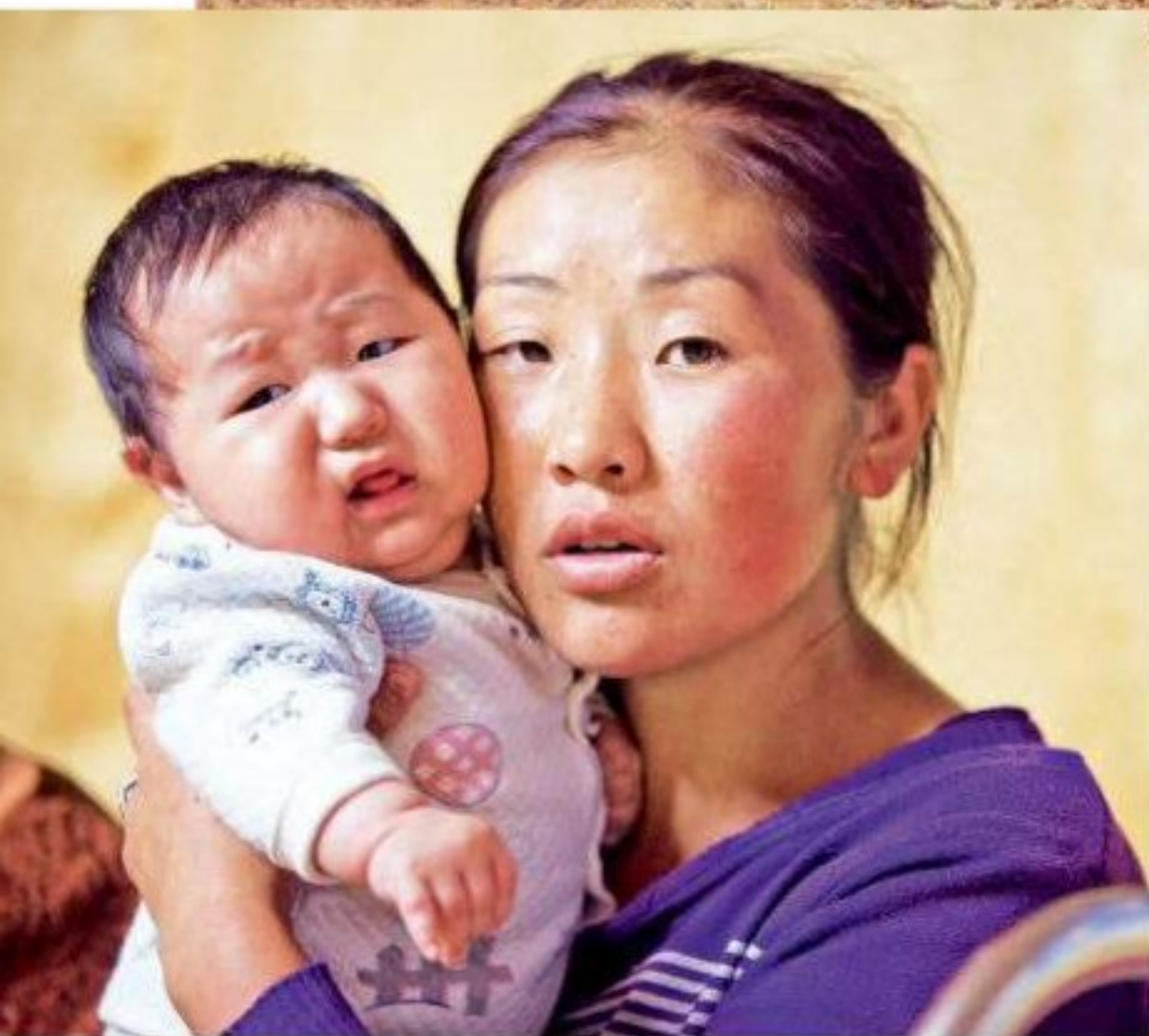
Early in the piece, I was trying to get the boys and myself down into this gorge in Kazakhstan and it was a bit of a tester for everyone. To be honest, I hadn't really ever ridden with these guys. How can I say it, my aspirations of what would be an adventure would be a little different to theirs. Real early in the piece, I looked back and Hein had fallen off I don't know how many times and Scott was pushing his bike, while I'm halfway up this hill that would be more likened to a section of Erzberg and I just thought, "Oh shit, I'm probably going a bit hard here for day two in Kazakhstan." So I had to rethink the trip from there a little and manage the team and our capabilities.



Derelict petrol stations are a common sight in Kazakhstan, especially bordering the city of Semey, where Russian nuclear testing has rendered the region a wasteland.

Mounted on horseback not long after birth, the Nomads of Mongolia are renowned as the best horsemen in the world. They break in wild horses bareback with nothing more than a piece of rope and determination.

HARD DRIVES FULL OF VISION FROM RUSSIA AND DRONES ETC. WERE A MASSIVE STRESS TO CARRY INTO COMMUNIST COUNTRIES



WERE THERE ANY TIMES WHERE FUEL, WATER OR FOOD WAS SCARCE?

Absolutely. We were never really that abundant with food and fuel came really close. It was more so in Mongolia because it was so hard to ascertain where fuel was actually available. With the communication barrier and the fact it's not really a sophisticated fuel network, we had locals pointing and that's about as good as it got – and they don't mean the next town, they just mean in that direction and it might be 400km later. We had pretty good range with our tanks and then an additional 8L bladder on each bike but the main stress was water. We were going a couple of days at a time without access to anything unless we stumbled across a river to replenish water so that was the tricky one, just managing water. Food and fuel you could get by. I mean, sometimes we would wake up having finished

rations the night before and not have anything to eat and have to put in 200-300km before we would get to somewhere we could source some water.

WAS DROWNING THE BIKE THE SCARIEST MOMENT OF THE TRIP?

Yeah, it was, because I drowned it completely and it wasn't by doing anything stupid. By that point I had crossed probably 15 rivers and you just get a bit of a feel and pick your line and what have you. But this one was different; the giveaway should have been that it was so filled with soil. It was just the sheer water pressure, not so much the depth but the force of the running water that just washed me away pretty quickly. We were over 100km from anywhere. I knew the bike would be alright because as I felt it get washed from under me, I just killed it and hung onto it. The scary thing was that

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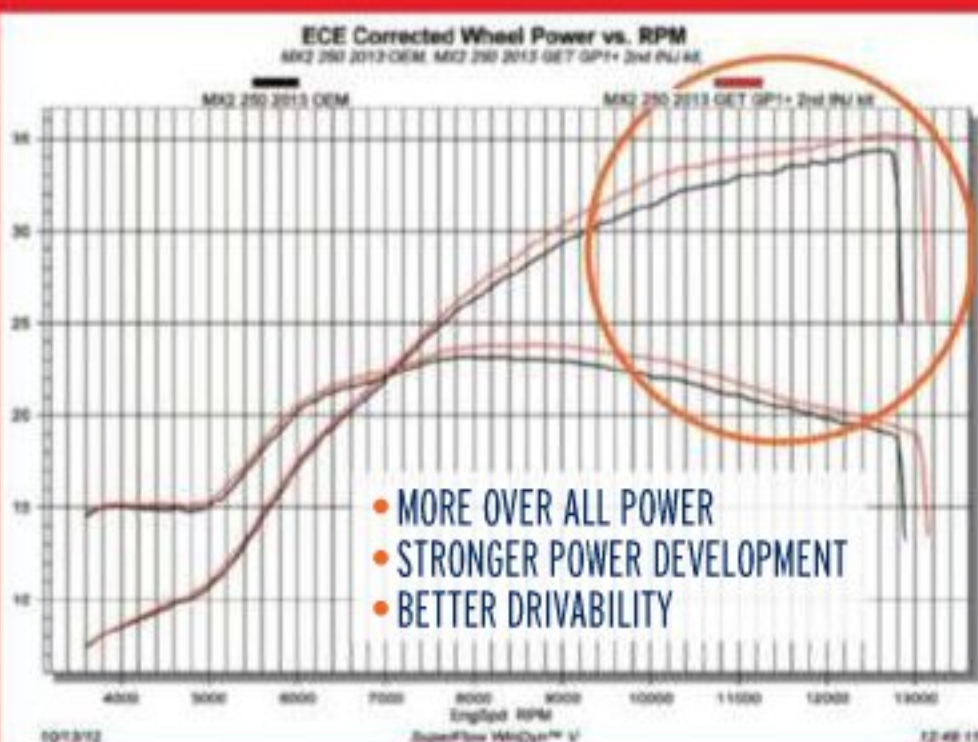


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I had everything on board — the hard drives, the laptop and the camera gear. Just seeing the bike completely submerged and being taken... I just had to ride it out. It took all of my strength to push on the bottom of the river and just nudge it towards the bank a little bit at a time. It kind of floated — between the 20L tank and the saddle bags it stayed light in the water, so I had to get it to the side so it would dig into the ground and stop continuing down the river. Anyway, it was completely full. You'll see in the film, it's pretty funny. The gearbox was a complete milkshake and we were 100km from getting any sort of service to it. The way I went about resuscitating it and how it continued without any problems to the end was a credit to the bike.

WERE THERE ANY OTHER SCARY MOMENTS DURING THE TRIP?

No, not really. It was much better than expected, especially in Russia. The Russian military were so cool, there was never any sort of fear or threat like that. Given this trip was so much longer and the bikes were so

THE SCARY THING WAS THAT I HAD EVERYTHING ON BOARD — THE HARD DRIVES, THE LAPTOP AND THE CAMERA GEAR. JUST SEEING THE BIKE COMPLETELY SUBMERGED AND BEING TAKEN ... I JUST HAD TO RIDE IT OUT



Mongolian Gers are collapsible circular tents that are very cosy in the sub-zero winters and baking hot summers.

much more prepared, looking back, it's easy to be scared of what we did, crossing the Gobi Desert and all, but when you're a month into it and you've just been living on a 500 and riding, filming and exploring every day, you don't notice the severity of the situation. The single greatest thing I did to help our safety was to get the suspension done to suit the load we were carrying. There were multiple occasions where big crashes were close to happening, when you're just coming up on eroded terrain, thinking "here we go" and the bike just handles it, then to look back and see M3 loaded up with all that stuff and just expecting to see a monumental cartwheel when we are still miles from anywhere... so to see the bike just take it and keep the guys upright was a relief.

HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN IT WAS ALL DONE?

If it was just a tour, it would be a bit of a disappointment because it was all over, but there are so many things on top of all that that make it a relief to finish. Don't get me wrong — it's an experience of a lifetime but just sealing the deal and banking the content for the film and getting everyone through it safe is really a relief. Even touching down in

Australia and having all the content home safe was not really a given. At the end of the trip and on the train ride into China, all this camera gear and stuff that could pass for a commercial production and hard drives full of vision from Russia and drones etc. were a massive stress to carry into communist countries. The real relief comes when I touch down in Australia. Looking back, sometimes it's a bit of a job, too. It's hard to keep everyone motivated and to keep pushing and seeking that adventure, seeking that content, taking time to set up the cameras and getting the shots. It can all wear you down. Then at the end of each day, I need to download content and instead of being in a hotel room, it's in a tent in the cold or wind or with mozzies trying to chew the tent down and I'm there trying to download the day's videos, charge batteries off the bike and just get everything ready to do it all again the next day and then hopefully get some sort of sleep. Seven weeks of that is pretty taxing on the body but to maintain a real positive mindset across the team can be a massive challenge in itself. I guess it's the ultimate test of character. **DAW**

For details on the release of *Motonomad II Riders of the Steppe*, check out motologyfilms.com for what is sure to be another epic motorcycle adventure film.



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WHAT A LEGEND

WHAT A LEGEND... THAT'S WHAT WE ALL THOUGHT AS WE WATCHED TOBY PRICE WIN THE 2016 DAKAR RALLY. WHAT A LEGEND...

STORY BY DAMIEN ASHENHURST PICS BY RED BULL

Having raced for 48 hours in only his second Dakar rally, Aussie Toby Price became the first Australian to ever win the famous race and etch his name into a hall of legends like no other.

We've all been watching Toby win everything in off-road since he bagged his first surprising title at the 2009 AORC series for MSC Kawasaki. We've seen him dominate Finke and Hattah, the A4DE and ISDE, and win at will in the AORC. Last year he entered his first Dakar as an outsider on the Red Bull and Factory KTM Rally teams, but as riders fell he found himself moved up in the ranks and managed to secure third place. It was a huge moment for Aussie motorsport, but it was about to get more serious when the five-time Dakar winner Marc Coma announced his retirement from racing and a pretty big seat was made available. Toby was offered the opportunity with the Red Bull KTM Rally team. He said at the time, "I'm very excited but it's also such a bummer to see good friend Marc Coma retire from racing.





TWITTER GETS BEHIND TOBY

Athletes from all sports, actors and journos showed plenty of support when Toby crossed the line.

ERIC BANA

@EricBana67

Make no mistake Australians, this is the #1 sport story of the summer. Congrats Toby.

KURT FEARNLEY

@kurtfearnley

@tobyprice87 you bloody legend!!! Newcastle/Aus is proud of you champ!! First Aussie to get the win in Dakar rally. Love ya work mate!

JESS SCHIPPER

@JessSchipper

Huge congrats to @tobyprice87 for winning the #dakar16 rally!! First Aussie to win!!!

MARK WEBBER

@AussieGrit

Hey @tobyprice87 super effort. @KTM_Racing @redbull @redbullmotors You got the big one. #Dakar2016

LIZ ELLIS

@LizzyLegsEllis

Congrats @tobyprice87!! Massive achievement given what you have overcome.

CASEY STONER

@Official_CS27

What an absolutely dominating ride from @tobyprice87 to win the 2016 @dakar. So happy for you mate, outstanding ride!!

CHRIS VERMEULEN

@chrisvermeulen7

Unreal @tobyprice87 great ride, so happy for you!

DARYL BEATTIE

@DB_Adventures

So happy! Another great achievement @tobyprice87 #AussieAussieAussie #motorcycle #Dreams #Dakar2016 #Australiamate

WAYNE GARDNER

@TheWayneGardner

Congrats Toby Price on your Dakar victory. In True Aussie style.





Now the hard work begins but I cannot thank everybody at KTM enough for the chance and I'm looking forward to what I can do."

We then watched over the following months when he travelled the globe learning how to ride that big race rig and navigate in the toughest environments. Many would have been questioning if he had what it takes to be a serious threat to a Dakar win but back in Oz, we saw the guy that had won everything thrown at him take on yet another challenge.

Just three short years since he posted a photo of himself in a hospital bed in the States with a broken neck and a caption that read, "Very lucky I have full movement because I should be done from the neck down. [The doctors] are blown away I'm still moving," Toby was heading to Dakar on factory equipment with the full backing of the most powerful team in Rally. In those three years since his crash, he'd returned to Finke and won. He won at Hattah as well and it was clear he wasn't at all spooked by the high-speed desert races.

Toby also lost a mentor and good friend in Kurt Caselli, who was killed on the Baja track in late 2013. This affected Toby deeply. "This should never happen to great people like Kurt," Toby wrote on Facebook. "It's torn me to pieces to know I'll never see this guy again and for his family, friends and fiancé, I'm so sorry, I can't put into words how hard this would be for you all... This guy is the only reason I got so many chances over here and I'm so lost right now and can't thank him at all for it anymore."



JOLENE VAN VUGT

@jolenevanvugt63

Well there you have it! Toby Price Racing you're an animal. So gnarly and awesome. Congratulations, very pumped.

WILL HAGON

@hagonvoice

Toby Price confirms Australian motorcycle racing talent, backing up 3 Aussie teams in the 90th ISDE. We won the Senior, Junior and Womens!

GRANT DENYER

@grantdenyer

He SMASHED em!! @tobyprice87 u r THE MAN! 1st Aussie to win toughest race in the world. So proud. Well done CHAMP.

DANIEL RICCIARDO

@danielricciardo

Mad respect @tobyprice87. Done Australia proud. Glad to see you're getting the recognition you deserve. Good on ya man!

RED BULL AUSTRALIA

@redbullau

The 1st Aussie to win the Dakar Rally! A huge victory for @tobyprice87 after a 48 hour race. Well done, mate!

DAKAR RALLY 2016 TOP TEN

1. Toby Price (KTM)
48h09m15s
2. Štefan Svitko (KTM)
+39m41s
3. Pablo Quintanilla (Husqvarna)
+48m48s
4. Kevin Benavides (Honda)
+54m47s
5. Hélder Rodrigues (Yamaha)
+55m44s
6. Adrien van Beveren (Yamaha)
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We've been watching Toby win everything in off-road since he bagged his first surprising title at the 2009 AORC series

At home in the Hunter Valley, Toby's name is nearing mention with the same reverence that Chad Reed's is (Casey Stoner is up there as well). He is a once-in-a-generation rider. The mainstream media was sluggish to pick up the Dakar story but as it drew to a close, all the commercial channels were on it and the sport was elevated in both its exposure and its standing – a somewhat sad irony just weeks after funding was pulled

from Motorcycling Australia. From the moment Toby took the lead on Stage 8 and proceeded to gap the field day after day, his status grew both inside and outside the industry. This is one of the great Aussie motorsport wins of all time and we can only sit back and watch Toby carve out yet another win streak on a new bike, in new countries and in new challenges. It doesn't matter – he just keeps winning. **DA**

There must have been a point where the universe realised it can't keep Toby Price from winning. It had thrown everything at him in a short period of time only to see him get back on the bike and not only win but win big. Even putting a stick through his boot and breaking his foot just before Finke couldn't stop him from winning there and then at Hattah again shortly after. This guy is Mick Doohan-level tough.

Toby is not only the first Australian to win a Dakar but he's also the first to win it on just his second attempt, which is mind-blowing given the list of legends that have won this race. At 28 years old, there is plenty more desert racing to come and this could be the start of a career path that is on a level like no other Aussie rider has ever been able to approach in the desert, even though we have produced some brilliant riders through the years.

"I'm in shock. I never would've

thought I could win this race in my second attempt. This is incredible for my family, my friends and my fans back in Australia," Toby said at the end of his epic ride. "It hasn't quite sunk in yet. It's insane. Two years ago, I didn't even think I would be doing this. Just to be here and to cross the finish line of the Dakar is a win in itself. To be on the top step of the podium is unbelievable."

And make no mistake, this was a tough Dakar with insane heat and dangerous tracks through remote terrain at incredible speeds. Toby rode smart all through the event and saw rivals drop off through errors and penalties while he kept his head and pushed hard when the time was right.

"I tackled the race in true Aussie style. I attacked when I had to, when the time was right, and I kept an eye on my bike during the all-important marathon stages. I also navigated rather well."



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KATE and



CHUCKY

If I were to ask you what an Under 19s Australian Off-Road Champion (AORC)/a rider who was part of last year's winning ISDE Junior World Trophy team and a veterinarian have in common, what would your answer be? Not a hell of a lot, right? Well, guess again. It's amazing how this world works and brings different kinds of people together, especially in motorcycle racing.

The enduro family more than likely already knows who Daniel "Chucky" Sanders is. Let's face facts: it's kind of hard not to know who this 21-year-old is. He's young, charismatic and he's going places – fast! In fact, even before the curtains are drawn back on this year's

AORC season, which kicks into life on 19-20 March in Queensland, the factory KTM Enduro Racing Team pilot is already being labelled as one of the favourites to take out this year's crown following Toby Price's departure to desert rally racing.

BRAINS BEHIND THE BARS

On the other side of the spectrum is 29-year-old Kate "Thursday" Norman, who hails from Yarra Glen in Victoria and who is slowly starting to make a name for herself. While Kate is still quite new to the whole enduro thing – she sat out most of 2015 after hurting herself early in the year – she is without doubt going to be

running inside the top 10 or thereabouts in this year's Women's AORC series.

When I came up with the idea for this article, DIRT ACTION editor Damien told me to feature these two riders, "What on earth is someone like Kate, a veterinarian, doing hanging out with idiots like us?" he exclaimed – and with good reason.

Who is Kate Norman and how on earth did her and Chucky become good mates?

Well, first things first, Kate got into the two-wheel sport in a fairly strange way.

She started riding horses at the age of 10 and did show jumping and eventing until five years ago. At



that particular time, one of her horses injured itself and while the horse was recovering, Kate spent most weekends out at Flowerdale, Victoria, watching her partner ride dirtbikes. This is where she got the itch to try her hand at a different type of horsepower.

This down-to-earth country girl started her motorcycle racing in motocross but we won't hold that against her. In 2010 she competed in her first race, a round of the Victorian Motocross Championship in Shepparton aboard a 2009 CR250F, and managed to finish in ninth place.

Her best two seasons in the Victorian Motocross Championship were in 2012 and 2013, when she managed to finish second overall. Kate also clinched the 2013 Gippsland MX series, proving she knows how to get around a race track alright.

Her enduro racing, however, didn't ignite into action until April of last year. But how did it all happen and where does Chucky fit into the whole equation?



Provisional 2016 Australian Off-Road Championship calendar:

Round 1-2: 19-20 March - Qld

Round 3-4: 23-24 April - SA

Round 5-6: 18-19 June - NSW

Round 7-8: 23-24 July - Vic

Round 9-10: 13-14 August - NSW

Round 11-12: 10-11 September - Vic

abusing me and I've done nothing wrong. So we kept talking and by the end of the night she said she was going to come riding that week with me and she was going to smoke me. So I thought, alright — game on!"

Kate came around to Chucky's house in Three Bridges on a Thursday, which was her day off during the week and was the reason why she got her nickname "Thursday" within the KTM team.

Things didn't get off to a good start. "When Kate was unloading her bike, she dropped the front wheel off the ramp and pretty much laid the bike down right in front of me, and I'm like, 'I'm in for a long day here,'" Chucky says.

At this stage Chucky was training for the upcoming 2015 Enduro-X Nationals. So while he was training on his Enduro-X track, he sent Kate away onto the motocross track to see how she went.

"She was going alright — doing some skids, ripping up the dirt and the usual stuff. When Kate saw me riding the Enduro-X track, she said to me, 'Wow, that looks hard but I would like to have a go at it.'"

Before that fateful day, Kate had never been over a log in her life. Chucky said: "You see that stick; go over that and you can work your way up."

"Once she got over her mental breakdown about getting over this little bit of a wooden object, she decided to upgrade from a stick to a small log before making her way onto the Enduro-X track itself," Chucky says.

Kate says Chucky did not hand out a lot of encouragement during this time. However, he openly admitted to me that she did have some balls about her.

"I said to Kate, 'Just roll over the obstacles first and see how you go', and she did that. The only real drama was the fact that she had never really done any slow riding skills before, which saw her in struggle street for a bit while riding over the logs."

"You need some balance when you are hitting these types of things," Chucky explains. "When I saw her going over my tyre rollers I thought she was going to

What on earth is someone like Kate, a veterinarian, doing hanging out with idiots like us?

CHUCKY MEETS KATE

Kate met Chucky at an after party at the conclusion of the 2014 Victorian Off-Road Championship (VORC), which saw Chucky winning the Pro class championship. He and his wild and somewhat out-of-control "fan club" continued to party on at what is called the "dirty Dorset" — the Dorset Gardens Hotel in Croydon. It was here Kate approached Chucky and got things going in a bizarre way, as Chucky explains. "Kate came up to me and started abusing me, in a fun way, saying 'I know you from somewhere', as I still had my KTM shirt on.

"I thought to myself, who is she? She just started

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CHUCKY'S VIEW ON 2015-2016 AND BEYOND

While Chucky may have finished off the 2015 season in fourth place on a countback in his debut year with the KTM Enduro Racing Team, it wasn't what he was looking for.

Chucky scored a total of four outright podium finishes in 2015, which included one second and three third places. He finished runner-up to Toby Price in the E3 class, 32 points down on him.

"After finishing sixth overall as a privateer in 2014, I was devastated to finish fourth, really. I was pretty pissed off, to be honest," Chucky says.

"I did finish off last year really strong. I know I did shock a few people – including myself – result-wise. It has stung me pretty bad. To finish third would have been awesome, not on a countback. It does suck but this has fired me up for 2016 and I so want to win the championship this year!"

Chucky doesn't feel any pressure going into this year's championship as he knows what he has done over the summer break has been good enough to have him more than ready to take on Australia's best riders.

"This year is the year to have a red-hot crack and show Australia and the world what I can do. I've got the best team in the country right behind me so the whole package is looking very good," he says.

If the racer does lock up this year's championship, his goal after that is to get over to Europe and race in the World Enduro Championship. There were a few offers on the table last year but Chucky knocked them back as he still has unfinished business in Australia.

"The year 2017 is a 100 per cent option to go overseas," he says. "I believe one more year racing in Australia will be good for me and if I'm ready to make the jump overseas, then I will."

try to double them the speed she was going up to them. I was scared for her life."

When the KTM team made the trek out to Chucky's 440-acre property to do some pre-season testing, Kate not only impressed Chucky but also Toby Price, Tye Simmonds and team manager Ben Grabham.

"The boys were like, 'Man, she can actually ride!'

I said, 'Just wait till she has a crack around the Enduro-X track'. They were like, 'Bullshit! Really?'" Chucky says.

While the KTM lads were taking time out in the truck, Kate was hard at it cutting laps around the track and from time to time hitting the deck. When she did eat dirt, Toby and Tye got Chucky to go over and help out – but do you think he did? No, of course not.

But why was that? "She should learn the hard way and toughen up," Chucky says. "I never got any sympathy as a kid. If Dad told me to push the bike up the hill, I had to push it up the hill myself. If I couldn't start my bike, I couldn't ride it."

STRAIGHT TALK

The hardest part for Chucky while training Kate was telling her to stop. "You can't tell her to stop as you have had enough. She just kept going at it. Kate sure did have a lot of dedication while training, that's for sure, and I think that will help her succeed in 2016," he says.

While Chucky was quite hard on Kate in training her up for her crack at the 2015 VORC and AORC series, she thanks Chucky for his no-nonsense approach as it made her want to try to go faster and harder. "Toby and Tye were very nice about it all," Kate says. "Chucky would say 'it's shit, do it again. Do it again; you're riding like a girl.'"

It was during this time that Chucky started saying how much better off-roads were compared to motocross and that she should try it out.

"I wanted a new challenge, so I bit the bullet and decided to give enduro racing a go," Kate says.

Her first-ever enduro race took place at Three Bridges on April 12, 2015 in a two-hour race. Kate describes this first taste as a write-off of a round.

"It didn't go well at all. I decided not to do a pit stop and on the last lap I clipped a tree with my right foot and broke four metatarsals," she says.

But Kate still soldiered on, hoping that she didn't break anything, and came home in 19th position. The following weekend was rounds three and four of the AORC at Hedley in Victoria. You would think anyone with four broken metatarsals would give the race a miss – but not this rider. Even after being placed in a moon boot, Kate gritted her teeth and still competed in Saturday's cross-country format. She finished in an impressive 13th position in her first-ever attempt at an AORC round and seventh in VORC.

"I was in quite a bit of pain," Kate explains. "I had to get boots that were a couple of sizes bigger so I could get my foot in them. We even had to cut the boot open and tape it together just so I could get my foot in there. It was hard, but I really wanted to race as I had been training all summer to do it."

Chucky was not full of praise about Kate's idea of racing that weekend at Hedley. "I thought she was an idiot, to tell you the truth," he says. "She was going to go to America and ride the following week, so there was no point, really."

The Wednesday after Hedley, Kate took off to the US



**I was devastated to finish fourth.
I was pretty pissed off, to be honest**



and rode some of the best tracks in the world including Perris, Milestone and Starwest. She even raced at Glen Helen in the women's open MX class and won. On top of that, with her backing from Fox Head here in Australia and thanks to Scott Runciman from Monza Imports for teeing it up, she got an awesome tour of the Fox headquarters in California.

Back in Oz at the end of May, she competed in round four and five of the VORC at Three Bridges and, again, hurt herself. "A few minutes into the cross-country, another rider clipped my handlebar causing me to come off and hurt myself," Kate explains. This saw her break her ulnar collateral ligament in her thumb, forcing her to sit out the rest of the 2015 AORC and VORC seasons.

After having eight weeks off the bike following surgery on her foot – this involved having three plates inserted – and then a week later having a pin put into her thumb, it wasn't until November last year that Kate raced again, this time at Wonthaggi motocross track. She backed it up the following day at Three Bridges at another MCRCV round.

That weekend was also her first race aboard her new 2016 KTM 250SXF. She bought the bike from Bolton Motorcycles after jumping off her Suzuki RMZ250.

"I love the new KTM 250SXF," Kate says. "It's similar to the Suzuki in a lot of ways but I just find it suits my riding style a lot better. With a new bike and great support from all my sponsors I have on board now, I'm really excited to get the season underway. To know I'll be starting the season injury free and 100 per cent fit is a big confidence boost right there."

In fact, unlike Chucky who keeps his bikes in his shed, Kate keeps her bike in her lounge room as it's her pride and joy. Now back to full fitness and raring to go, she is pinning her hopes on finishing in the top eight in this year's AORC. In the VORC, meanwhile, she is aiming for a top-three finish.

While the female presence in the AORC/VORC paddock is growing year by year, there still room for more ladies on the track. Kate has some sound advice to any girls out there wishing to take on the sport: "Just give it a go," she says.

"There are a lot of good classes out there at the moment and everyone is very supportive and happy to lend a hand. You just need to get out there." *EW*



SAFE



HANDS

THE **RACESAFE MEDICAL TEAM** HAS BECOME AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN AUSTRALIAN RACING, OFFERING THE BEST POSSIBLE TRACKSIDE CARE FROM A TEAM OF DEDICATED MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS THAT WE COULDN'T RACE WITHOUT. **THEY ARE THE UNSUNG HEROES OF OUR SPORT**

STORY BY SCOTT BISHOP
PHOTOS BY AARYN MINERDS





“We have a code 1,” says the usually unflappable Simon Maas, director of RACESAFE, on his headset. He stands just metres away from Dylan Wilson, who went down heavily on the opening lap of race two of the MXD class at the first round of the 2015 MX Nationals at Horsham.

With that command, the 14-member team springs into action as the stress on Simon’s face explains the situation. Dylan is motionless on the track as the team rush to his aid. Upon arrival, Dylan is unconscious, not breathing and his other vital signs are almost non-existent. It’s the worst-case scenario for the RACESAFE crew but one they have faced many times before.

The race is called off and the riders head back to the starting gate totally unaware of what is unfolding out on the track. RACESAFE doctors and paramedics get to work and are urgently trying to get some signs of life from the downed rider. Dylan is not in a good way and his condition is deteriorating rapidly as the medical helicopter is called, but the RACESAFE team put their years of experience and knowledge to work, doing everything they can to keep their rider in safe hands.

The rest of the meeting is called off as Kevin Williams mentions that Dylan is in a critical condition and the entire medical team are attending to him. It’s only then that the rest of the MXD riders understand the severity of what’s happening on the track. Kevin often mentions at rider briefings that he will do everything in his power to keep a race going but if we have to stop, it will be only for a very serious or urgent situation. It gets no more serious than this. The looks on the riders’ faces change in an instant. In MXD, the rivalries haven’t really formed and a lot of them are

mates who have ridden or raced together for years. Dylan’s accident has shocked them.

Back in the RACESAFE truck, things are tense. Dee is not in a good way and the RACESAFE team are under the pump to keep him alive. These guys are part of the MX Nationals fabric and are friends with the riders and teams. It hits them hard to see riders hurt but right now is no time for emotion. Dee’s life is in their hands as the ambulance arrives and whisks him away on a medical helicopter, where he is then transferred to Melbourne.

I walked up to Simon after the majority of the competitors had left and just a few teams were left packing up and asked about Dee. Again, with emotion in his eyes and fear in his voice, he tells me what happened on the track and that he has no idea if Dee will make it

through the night. Dee had serious head injuries and had basically died on the track that afternoon.

Fast-forward 12 months later and Dee Wilson is indeed alive and doing well. He has made a full recovery from his injuries and while his life has changed, he is back to living a normal life and back to being a regular 19-year-old kid. He may race again, he may not, but had it not been for RACESAFE and their team of medical professionals under the direction of Simon, things might have been a lot different for Dylan and his family.

RACESAFE is a medical team that is now indispensable in Australian racing. At some stage over the past 20 years of their involvement in Australian motorcycle racing, nearly every team or rider has leant on the RACESAFE team to get them through an event,





SIMON'S MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Kirk Gibbs crash at Coolum in 2012.

Kirk wasn't in a good way at all but to have him back and racing and now winning an Australian MX1 championship is very rewarding to RACESAFE.

Dee Wilson at Horsham in 2015. That was similar to Kirk's and we weren't sure which way it was going to go. We see Dee at the races now and he is looking great.

Joel Evans walking into our truck at the Adelaide Supercross had us all pretty emotional. Joel crashed heavily at Murray Bridge earlier in the year but has made huge strides forward even though things weren't good in the days after his fall.

We have worked with Dan Reardon a lot over recent years. When he stopped riding and was in his training business, we assisted him with riders and now that he is riding again, we seem to see him even more. Helping him at the final round of the ASX was good.

Matt Moss carried a scaphoid injury throughout the 2013 season. We had to work on him every round to keep him on track yet he won both championships that year.

or get treatment for an injury. Some are as serious as above, with Kirk Gibbs in a similar situation in 2011 and the unforgettable passing of Andrew McFarlane in 2010. But with the RACESAFE team on-site, everyone has peace of mind that the best possible people are there and will do whatever they can in any situation.

"It wasn't always like that," Simon tells me. "When we first started, many of the riders and teams thought that we were there to stop them racing if they had an injury so they feared us or simply didn't approach us.

"It probably wasn't until we worked with Tye Simmonds during the Supercross series in 2008 that the riders saw we were there to assist if we could. Tye had a terrible knee and required surgery but we were able to offer treatment at the track each round

and strapping that would see him through each race. And at the end of the year, Tye finished second in the championship and I think that was the turning point for us in motocross."

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Casting back to 1996, Maas had just returned from a stint in the US, where he worked at high-profile events in Indianapolis, to see the poor quality in medical standards trackside in Australia.

"Basically, the majority of the events I had been to or seen in Australia up until that point were manned by first-aid people. For a sport like motorcycle racing, this simply wasn't good enough, so I scrounged together a few dollars, called in a few favours from people I knew

in the medical profession and RACESAFE started," Simon says.

In that 20-year period, a lot has changed for RACESAFE. They now work out of a truck not dissimilar to what the major race teams use, with RACESAFE working more than 35 events per year. It is a huge financial burden pulling all the aspects together and the cost to fund the mobile medical unit for a year is enormous.

"We have a small band of rider-safety partners, as we call them, that generously contribute to RACESAFE. This year, Motorcycling Australia has stepped up its funding while Yamaha, GAS Imports, Honda, KTM and Link International have also been great supporters," Simon explains.

"We are always on the lookout for funding to offset our costs. Kevin Williams of WEM has been a huge fan and totally believes in what we do. Kevin assists us in many ways with fundraisers to keep us at the track and looking after his customers."

DOC IN THE HOUSE

Now in its 20th year, RACESAFE has assembled some of the best medical practitioners in the country. Depending on the track, anywhere from 11 to 18 medical experts are taken to an event to ensure riders are in the best hands.

"Choosing the people on our team is very specific. First up, they must be motorcycle fans or riders. In fact, most of the people we use would describe themselves as motorcycle riders who practise medicine rather than doctors who ride. They have a passion for the sport and because they volunteer their time and expertise, they obviously want to be there," Simon says.

"The best thing I can say, and something that everyone needs to understand, is that my crew give





up their weekends and volunteer, free of charge, to be at the races despite the effect that the medical decisions they make might have on their own full-time professional career. Sometimes they don't even see a single race during a busy day in the RACESAFE truck.

"Our staff turnover rate is very low and most of the people we have with us have been there for a long time. Their position in the team isn't up for grabs — we hand select only the best practitioners."

DATA

With a team that is the best in the business and keen motorcycle enthusiasts, RACESAFE has been a mainstay at major motorcycle events around the country. In those 20 years, a lot of data has been accumulated so that when going to event, Simon can select the right people to suit the venue and keep the riders as safe as possible.

"In dirtbikes, certain styles of tracks produce certain styles of injuries and our years of data allow us to have the right medics at the venue. For example, a fast track like a Murray Bridge might require a different set of people to what I would take to a sand track such as Cooloom, where knee and ankle injuries are the most common.

Hard-pack tracks also produce a certain style of injury and Supercross can really put a strain on the team as the injuries can be common and varied. It's really important we keep recording injuries and information from the events we do so we are best prepared the next time we are at that venue."

A DAY IN MOTION

Keeping an eye on the RACESAFE medical unit on race weeks is hard work as it is a hive of activity.

The RACESAFE rig is one of the first to the venue as it requires preferential parking to be as close as possible to the track. The two all-wheel-drive Polaris buggies are unloaded as well as all the equipment they require for the weekend. Some tents and shade are set-up and the medical team start to roll in.

Saturday afternoon is usually spent looking over the track as with the years of experience the team now have, they can often pinpoint crash sites and have personnel stationed there during racing.



It's Sunday — race day — and it is a constant procession of riders getting any last-minute strapping or treatment as well as others who require a medical clearance from a previous fall. There are always bodies in motion and the riders seem to just keep appearing.

Practice gets underway and there is no rest for the wicked. A couple of riders have gone down in the MX2 practice session and the buggies start bringing back the riders. One rider needs his wrist looked at and will require further work at a hospital later that week, the other is just a bit beat up and needs some time to gather himself before returning to the track later in the day.

Racing is no different, with a slow but constant trickle of riders coming in — some direct from a crash, while others have finished their moto and need some maintenance work to keep going.

The day ends and the teams are heading out the exit gate. The RACESAFE crew are still there, going over the day, cleaning up the wounded and starting to put things away. It looks like busy work and it is.

POINT OF VIEW

Since I have been involved with team management, I can't count the number of times I have sent a rider over to the RACESAFE truck to get patched up. On rare occasions it's a full service or even a rebuild and without Simon and his team, some of the success we have had might not have been possible.

They provide an amazing service at the races but it is also their connections and follow up that is just as important. When I attend local races, it's always obvious to me that RACESAFE aren't there. The beauty isn't just in their medical knowledge but in the fact that because they also ride, they understand what you have done, what it does to your body and they also don't give you the moral high ground. They want you back on the track as quickly yet safely as possible.

We simply can't run a national event without them and we are all grateful for their presence. The effort Simon and his team make to be a part of our racing is nothing short of heroic. *DAW*



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STORY **SHANE BOOTH**
PHOTOGRAPHY **MATT BERNARD**



WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT BEING INVOLVED IN RCU?

CARMICHAEL: I think for me the most enjoyable part is the camaraderie that we have amongst all of us instructors — that part of it is always fun. Also, watching the progress of the riders when they come through my section from the beginning to the end and when they move onto the next instructor. That's the coolest part for me, just the progression you see.

EMIG: The time we spend together with our group is always fun but it's really rewarding to talk to the students after the event and get feedback from them. I've heard comments such as "that was the best day of my life", things like that. At the time when we are going through everything during the day, the students sometimes seem a little tired or overwhelmed but then at the end of the day, when they get through it, they seem to be really stoked.

STANTON: What I enjoy the most is meeting new people and working with the kids.



WHICH WAS YOUR TOUGHEST CHAMPIONSHIP TO WIN?

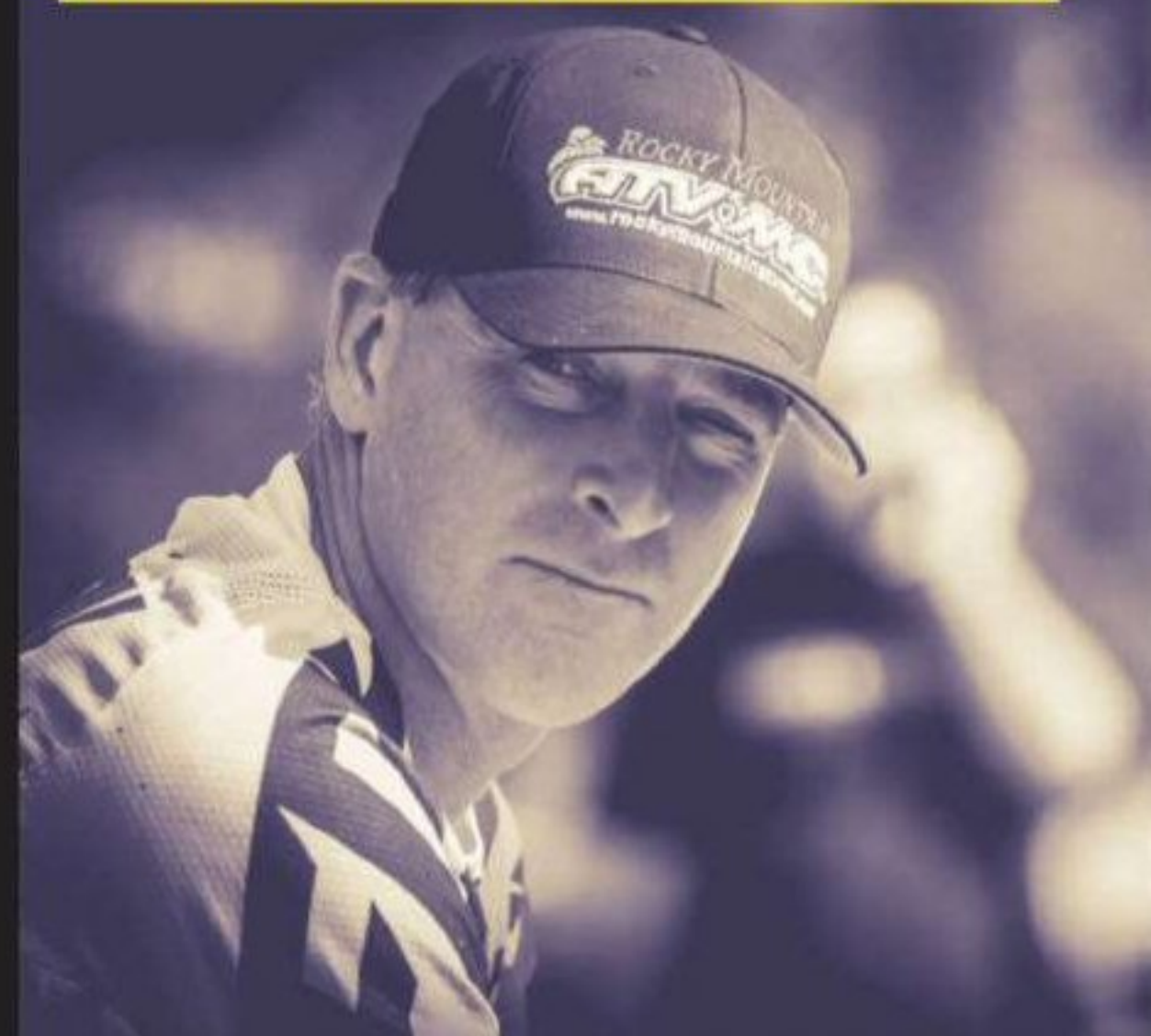
CARMICHAEL: That one is easy. There's actually two — the 2003 Supercross Championship series and the 2006 Supercross series. Those two championships were the hardest of my career by far.

EMIG: I would say it would have to be the 1996 250cc AMA Motocross Championship. I was down quite a bit in points and I got a lot of seconds at the beginning part of the season. It came down to the final race and I managed to win it. That one was pretty tough.

STANTON: You know a first championship is always tough but when you keep winning them and going back to back every year, it gets harder. The competition gets better and better so it's always a thrill to win your first one, but then those second and third ones are probably the toughest and it gets hard to win.



JEFF STANTON — 6-TIME AMA CHAMPION



SUPERCROSS OR MOTOCROSS AND WHY?

CARMICHAEL: I would say motocross because it was just so much easier for me. Supercross was always harder. Motocross just always came a little more natural to me, so I didn't have to put as much effort into it as I did for Supercross.

EMIG: I would have to say Supercross and the only reason is that I see that as the future of our sport.

STANTON: Moto, just because it was my bread and butter being in Michigan with the family. We rode a lot and enjoyed riding moto around the farm — it's where I cut my teeth in moto. It took me a few years to get Supercross down in my early years but I adapted to it. Moto for sure, though.



JEFF EMIG – 4-TIME AMA CHAMPION



DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST PRO WIN?

CARMICHAEL: Yep, it was 1997 Atlanta Supercross and it was a really cool feeling. You dream about it and for my first win to be at Atlanta Supercross was really special to me because I always went there as a kid to watch all the pros race, so to be able to win the race I watched as a kid was special.

EMIG: Well, yeah, technically it would be Houston Supercross in 1990 but when you get to be my age, those ones are hard to remember with any great detail.

STANTON: It was Atlanta Supercross, the same as Ricky, in 1989. It took about four races to get to that point but it all fell into place. The cards fell the way they needed to that night. It was a great race. Ricky Johnson had won the first four or five races up until that point but he made a mistake and fell down. There were three or four different leaders that night but I was at the right spot when the chequered flag dropped.



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WHO DRIVES THE RENTAL CAR WHEN YOU GUYS ARE TRAVELLING FOR RCU?

CARMICHAEL: Haha. Most of the time it's Stanton or myself and if it's not one of us, then it's usually whoever is babysitting us at each of the different countries and has lined everything up, you know — they'll drive. Either way, I'm always up front.

EMIG: Most of the time it's Ricky because he gets motion sickness and he has to drive. If he's not driving, then usually it's Stanton that's driving and Ricky has to sit shotgun or he'll get sick.

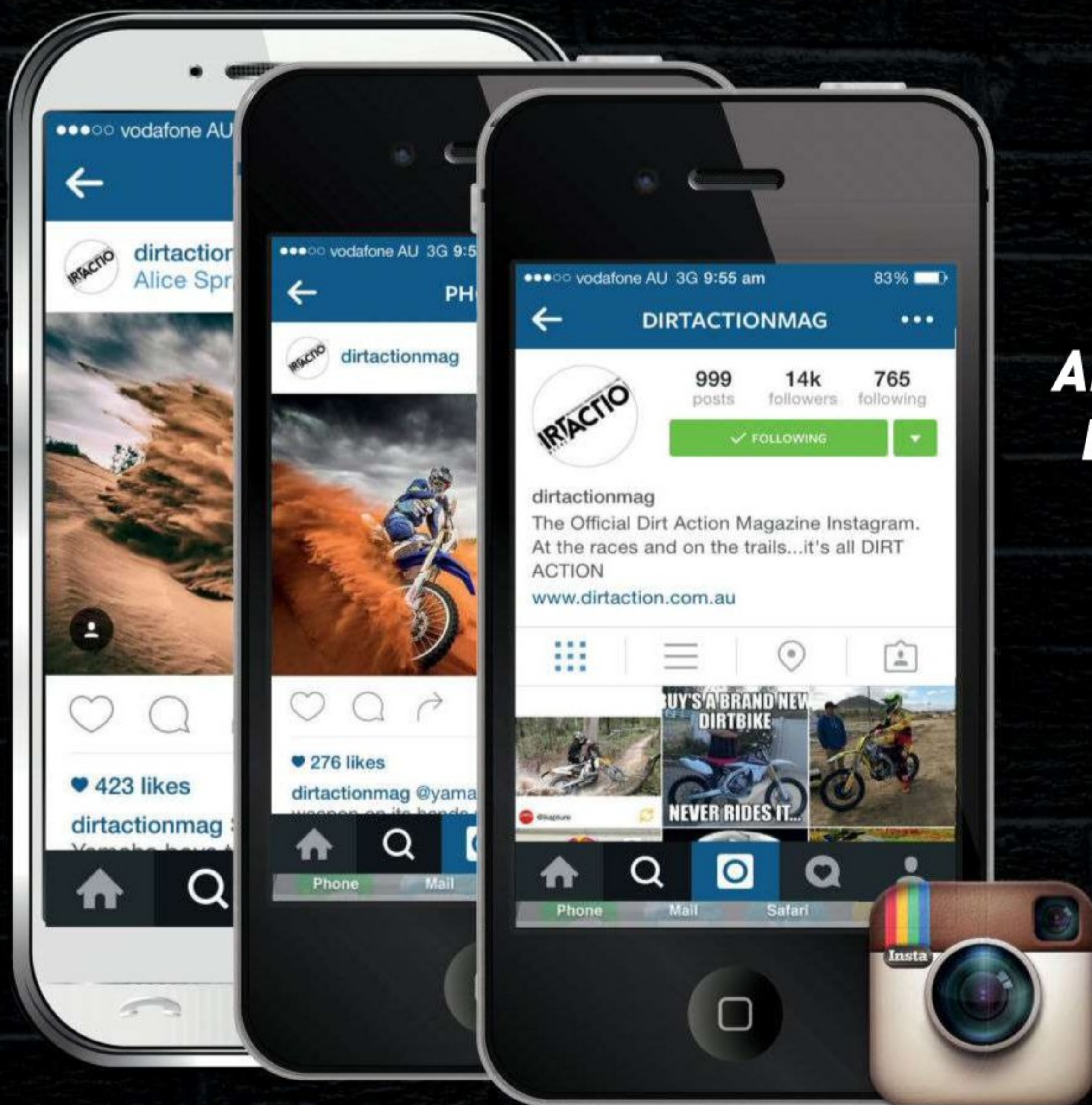
STANTON: Well, I'm sitting here driving the thing right now just because I'd much rather be driving than be passenger. I like to be in control.



R I C K Y CARMICHAEL – 15-TIME AMA CHAMPION



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CHAD REED'S AUS-X OPEN WAS SO MUCH
MORE THAN JUST GATE-TO-GATE RACING

REED!

STORY BY SCOTT BISHOP PHOTOS BY DAMIEN ASHENHURST

honesty



On the outside there are race wins, big dollars and adoring fans as Chad Reed continues to bring star power to Supercross. On his recent whirlwind trip back to Australia, I got to see what goes on behind the scenes as Chad again put Supercross back on the sporting map.

It's 8am on Sunday, the morning after Chad Reed whipped the capacity crowd into a frenzy at Allphones Arena after taking a wire-to-wire win in the 20-lap main event. He looked like he was back to top form and ready to contend for AMA championships.

Chad wanders through the vacant pit area, one of the first riders to arrive on day two. His spirits are high. "Morning Captain," I yelled to him as he bounced his way up the truck stairs and put down his backpack. Chad was up. He was motivated. He was genuinely excited and not just because he won the night before, but because he still loves racing a dirtbike and last night just cemented that.

"Morning Bish," he replies. "Ready to go again?" He then sat down next to me under the truck awning and we chatted for about 30 minutes in what was his only quiet time in his hectic trip to Australia. You see, Chad isn't just a rider. His name is far bigger than what most of us imagine and the demands on his time, especially when back here in Australia, are huge. Over the weekend of the AUS-X Open, I got to see first-hand what Chad goes through at an event like this and just how seriously he takes his role in the Australian sporting landscape.

His trip to Australia started way back in March when he verbally agreed to attend the event with promoters AME Management. It is a skeleton-staff trip for the ride as his wife, Ellie, and the kids have remained at home in Florida while Michael Byrne and mechanic Shane Drew accompany him on the long flight down under.

Drew is the only remaining employee of TwoTwo Motorsports. He moved from Factory Honda, where he was a chassis specialist, to be with Chad and he remains there despite the closure of the race team. He is on the tools with a rider for the first time in a long time but is pretty happy to be standing alongside Chad.

Michael Byrne has become Chad's right-hand man since he has stepped back from racing. He is his training partner, his riding buddy, his go-to man, his test rider, his planner and, most of all, his mate. Both know the demands of racing and Michael is there to ensure Chad stays on track and gets the job done.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25

Chad quietly slips into Australia and makes a quick visit to his family back in Newcastle. He even swings by Chris Watson Yamaha to pick up a new YZ450F to spin a couple of laps on and heads out for a ride with Luke George. In the meantime, his mechanic for the weekend, Shane Drew, heads for Yamaha Australia to meet up with the CDR Yamaha team and start work on Chad's race bike for the weekend. Suspension, bars, clamps and a host of other parts are swapped over and the bike is built up and detailed to be ready for media commitments.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26

After a quick swim, Chad heads down to Sydney where he is the special guest of Yamaha Australia. A lunch is put on for the YMA staff as Chad arrives to answer some questions, sign some posters and generally mingle with the YMA employees.

It is here Reed announces he will be Yamaha mounted for the 2016 season and, with the support of Factory Yamaha in the US, it will just be a matter of working out which truck the bike is transported in and finalising a few of the people he wants around him. He doesn't think it's a big issue and the wheels are turning. He is just focused on getting himself and his bike right for the start of the Supercross season.

From there, Chad wanders around the building and spots a fully assembled and prepared YZ250 two-stroke. The light bulbs go off in his head and 10 minutes later, the bike is being loaded up into the CDR Yamaha truck and taken out to the Allphones venue. Chad has a two-stroke back in the US but really wants to cut some laps on it at an indoor venue as he reminisces about the early part of his career racing two-strokes in Australia around the turn of the century.

He finishes his day with a quick wander through the building to thank everyone for their hospitality and he then checks into his hotel.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27

It's an early start. Channel 7's *Sunrise* is on deck, shooting the weather segment from inside the arena with a host of riders to assist and promote the event. There are six live crosses through the morning from 6am to 9am and Chad is there front and centre talking up the event. One cross he is riding, the next giving an

WHEN HE WALKS AROUND TO HIS TRUCK, THE FANS FOLLOW. WHEN HE HEAD TO THE PORTA POOPER, THE FANS FOLLOW



interview and he now presents as a media-savvy and thoroughly professional sportsman.

Just as that winds up, there is no time to get changed as the press day for the general media starts at 10am. Without Chad the event would barely raise a whisper, especially with other headlining events such as Taylor Swift and Stereosonic in town, but a solid media pack roll in and Chad has real star power. Even the mainstream media that don't know how many wheels a motorcycle has want to talk to Chad Reed. It's back on track with some riding and yet more interviews.

With that out of the way and the media happy with their footage, the man of the day quickly retreats to the truck to grab a drink and he eyes off that brand-new 250 two-stroke just waiting to be revved. We pull the forks out of Daniel Reardon's spare bike and put them in the two-stroke, crank the stock shock to full hard, bolt on a Pro Circuit Silencer (Chad brought it with him) and pour in some race gas. Chad couldn't get on the track fast enough.

The video footage of Chad on the bike on social media is of the very first laps he cut on the bike. Things get a lot faster after that. There is even talk he might drag out the 250 for a heat race but that soon disappears. No doubt Chad is quick on it and just as sharp as ever, while the sound of a two-stroke on track by itself in the empty Allphones Arena is aural bliss.

The two-stroke plan is to have Chad and Ricky Carmichael spin some laps together just for old time's sake. The plan comes unstuck when Ricky isn't 100 per cent confident in the bike he would get and doesn't want to risk any injury as he still has his RCU clinics to attend in the days after the AUS-X Open, so the two-stroke is parked by both guys.

As soon as Chad is off the track, he changes back into civilian clothes and into the rental bus across to Fox Sports studios. Chad has two interviews planned there – one with Ricky to promote the event and another with former road racer Daryl Beattie. These things always take longer than expected but both Chad and Ricky are experts in handling media requests.

It's then time to head back to Parramatta because AME has arranged a riverboat cruise for the event



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CHAD QUICKLY RETREATS TO THE TRUCK TO GRAB A DRINK AS HE EYES OFF THAT BRAND-NEW 250 TWO-STROKE JUST WAITING TO BE REVVED



partners along with special guests Chad and Ricky. The cruise floats down the river and into Sydney Harbour, taking in the beautiful scenery.

With the cruise over, it's finally time for a bite to eat and bed. Chad is now in full training mode and the Sydney event is taken very seriously. There are no party pies, sausage rolls or beers on the boat for this rider and its Michael's job to ensure he sticks to his diet.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28

Race day has finally arrived. As a rider, you get the run sheet for the day so you know when you are required on track and the only other real commitment you have is maybe a 30-minute autograph session at your team truck.

Chad has that and more. His deal back here in Australia is also thanks to those at Boost, Fly 360 and Fox as well as Yamaha, and soon there are just as many on-track commitments as there are off track. He has photo and autograph sessions booked in with each of these sponsors, sometimes twice in the day, and with the huge

crowd in attendance he spends up to an hour in any one location signing posters or taking photos with fans.

With the pit layout in the forecourt of the arena, the public are free to walk in and around the race trucks. Each time Chad returns from the track after a practice or qualifying session, hundreds of people stand around to watch, grab an autograph or chat with the superstar. As he walks around to his truck, fans follow. As he heads to the porta pooper, fans follow. He is always obliging and tries to keep as many fans as he can happy with a little bit of his time.

It almost 6pm as fans enter the building and leave Chad with his first bit of peace and quiet for the day. He retreats to get dressed and spends a few minutes with Michael to collect their thoughts and get their minds on the job. This might not be AMA but Chad wants to win. This is his turf. He closes his eyes and takes a few deep breaths. Michael tops up his water bottles and it's time to go into the stadium as opening ceremonies are about to start.

Chad is announced to the crowd and the place erupts. Fourteen-thousand fans scream as Chad rides

onto the floor with his arm in the air. No rider receives this reception in Australia but then again, this isn't any rider — this is Chad Reed. He stops for an interview, cracks a few donut jokes in Ricky Carmichael's direction, mentions that it's great to be back home and wishes the family were here with him. The helmet then goes on and it's time to go to work.

Chad wins the 20-lap final in an impressive showing. He arrives back at the truck just as the 14,000 people empty out from the stadium. He poses for photos, signs more posters, signs number plates, jerseys and whatever else is put in front of him before he has a quick chat to Shane and then gets changed. The night is done and together he and Michael head for a well-earned rest.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29

It's day two and Chad's enthusiasm is obvious. He wants to ride. As the rest of us roll in weary eyed and the race teams start to get things sorted for another day at the races, Chad happily talks with anyone that wants to have a chat. He is open and honest and answers any questions

thrown at him. I talk to him about TwoTwo Motorsports, about SuperX, about new bikes, traction control and a host of topics. Chad is passionate and knowledgeable. We even just shoot the breeze for a while and laugh about racing back in the '90s in Australia.

Sunday's crowd isn't as big but that doesn't mean Chad's commitments are any less. All sponsors want their pound of flesh and Chad is happy to fulfil his obligation.

The main event turns into the greatest Supercross race Australia has seen. Lawson Bopping leads, then Daniel Reardon pulls the 360 fly-by lane and gets by while Chad passes his way into fourth and sits behind Cooper Webb. Cooper and Chad both sneak by Lawson, then Chad runs it up the inside of Cooper at the end of the whoops to claim second, setting out after Daniel out front.

The four riders are still tightly bunched as lap 13 ticks over. Daniel swings left after the finish line jump and loses traction. Chad, right on his rear tyre, has nowhere to go and hits the fallen Daniel Reardon and goes down as well. Cooper Webb tries to ride high in the berm to get around the carnage but also gets caught up and allows Lawson Bopping back into the lead.

Lap 14 and Lawson leads with Cooper in second and Chad third. Again, Cooper and Chad pass Lawson and set sail for home. It's the young guy and the old man. The new and the old. Cooper is disappointed with his result on Saturday night and wants revenge. Chad doesn't want to hand over his crown to some young kid just yet and it's on.

Chad zeroes in on Cooper's back wheel and makes a lunge with two laps remaining. He doesn't make it stick. Chad is better through the whoops than Cooper and they both know it. There is only one lap left and they both know there is only one real spot to make it happen on the tight indoor circuit – at the end of the whoops. Cooper hits them as good as he has all weekend and is hard up against the left-hand side of the track to stop Chad charging up the inside.

Chad just pins it down the outside then squares him up in the lefthander. Chad has half a bike length on Cooper as they double then triple the next straight, but what he doesn't have is the inside for the next turn. Cooper over jumps the triple and pulls alongside Chad. Chad counters by hitting the brakes and cutting back on the inside again. Cooper reacts and just swings off the throttle and hammers the turn to get a bike length on Chad as they hit the finish line. Cooper punches the air and Chad has his YZ450F flat. What an amazing race.



Back at the truck, both guys have a laugh about it and begin to sign autographs and take photos with the fans. It's a race to celebrate and both are happy with what just transpired. Chad stays for as long as he can but his job is done. It's out of the work clobber and back to normal clothes. He thanks everyone on the CDR team and all at Yamaha for their help over the weekend before doing the same with other sponsors as he disappears into the night.

IS HE WORTH IT?

Chad Reed got paid a large sum of money to race the AUS-X Open. I don't know what the figure was and nor do I care, but he was worth every cent. Without Chad Reed, would the event have sold out? Without Chad Reed, would our sport receive the massive media attention it did that weekend? Without Chad Reed, how many kids would have gone home from that event wanting to be like him? Chad Reed is star power and now in his 30s, he has matured to be well spoken, polite and generous with his time, yet he is still the confident, ego-driven racer who rose to success 16 years ago when he left Australia. His workload here was big but he enjoyed it. He made people want to ride dirtbikes again and he did it with style. Thanks for coming, Chad! **E4W**



THE RCU EXPER

**GREG SMITH LEARNS THE TRICKS OF THE DIRT
TRADE FROM THE GREATEST OF ALL TIME**

STORY AND PHOTOS BY GREG SMITH



RICKY WAS SUCH A PERSONABLE GUY, WITH TRULY NOTHING BEING A SILLY QUESTION AND UNWORTHY OF AN ANSWER



My phone rings and it's SERCO Motorsport manager Gavin Eales. As is the case with Gavin, it's so hard to get a hold of him that I was fumbling with the answer button to see what he had to say. Without even a hello, he says, "What are you doing Saturday, December 5th?" I reply, "Nothing, tell me what I'm doing, Gav," and he says, "You're riding the Ricky Carmichael University Experience at Cooloom. I have a bike for you to use and I know you're going to have a real good time." As I say my thanks, the phone hangs up and he's gone.

For those of you who don't know me personally, let me confess something: motocross and I don't get along. Yes, I can ride on a motocross track but if there are jumps with spaces between them or corners with deep lines going through them, I'm hopeless. Sorry, let me rephrase that — I'm just hopeless unless it's smooth, flat and straight. Personally, I thought it was going to be a waste of everyone's time, not to mention the fact that I'd be there on a Serco YZ250F as well. Since that original call came through, both of Gav's race team superstars — Luke Clout and Jed Beaton — have been sidelined with injuries from the remaining rounds of the AUS-X, so Gav had decided to prep one of their bikes and bring the Serco semi along for me to pit out of... No pressure at all!

ABOUT RCU AUS

Ricky Carmichael University began in 2010 as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for riders of all ages and skill levels to learn from The Greatest of All Time, Ricky Carmichael. Since its inception, it has taught more than a few people in America to ride smoother, faster and safer as a result. So it was time to see if Australia was up to the RCU education level by travelling down



under for a rapid-access, one-week tour of the east coast of Australia. Well, northern east coast with Appin and Cooloom on the agenda and a special opportunity at the AUS-X supercross event in Sydney to race one-on-one with Chad Reed. In addition to multiple-US MX/SX-Championship-winner Ricky Carmichael were Jeff "6-Time" Stanton and Jeff "The Fro" Emig, both riders with extremely successful racing careers in the US. The three of these guys collectively have won more than 39 championship titles and have a combined total of 68 years of pro-level racing experience. If these guys couldn't teach me something, I was in trouble.

THE ARRIVAL

Full of nerves, I arrived at the track and, ecstatically, I noticed that Gavin had left the semi in the factory along with the race bikes. It was all apparently a gee-up but the fresh, new, customised 2016 Answer Elite gear that he gave me was real! I had a "spare Serco" YZ250F to use that was covered in the very familiar Serco racing livery sporting the Yoshimura brand as its centrepiece. There were actually three spare Serco bikes — one for Jason Curry (Monza Imports Queensland rep), another



for Scott Runciman (Fox Aus) and the “fastest” one for me – parked under a pop up and all very low-key, just as we like it. Me being a freeloader meant my name wasn’t listed, so I just filled in a few forms and waited to hear all the rules at rider briefing. With more than 100 riders turning up for the day, it was going to be crucial to get in the right group. I slotted into the “Clubman” group that was being chaperoned by Gavin so that worked out well. Another two guys that I knew showed up for this group too – Giant Bicycles MTB rider Michael “RonRon” Ronning and Gold Coast electrician-to-the-stars Mal “Hollywood” Dalton, both a little bit past the recruitment age for motocross... well, one more than the other.

As we were on the bikes for our warm-up laps, I noticed that Coolum is quite possibly the best track

in Australia to practice ride, especially when it’s been prepped for three days solid! It resembles a superhighway, something more similar to the Autobahn than a motocross track but, rest assured, once 100-plus riders had their three or more warm-up laps it got a little too tricky for my ageing MX senses.

THE LESSONS

The loudspeakers ring out: “Head to the track, we’re starting”. With so many nerves filling my stomach, I ride out and find my group. We then headed off to our first instruction point. This is with YAIM instructor and co-founder of Motodevelopment – not to mention all-round legend – Chris Urquhart. He’s teaching us the finer points on standing through whooped-out, high-

speed turns and the importance of looking ahead. We also touched on how to approach and exit sandy ruts. This is something I definitely need to practise more and it certainly helped to get shown what, why and where to use these skills. These guys just make it look so easy and what they say, works.

Once our first lesson came to an end, we were off to Jeff Stanton where it was all about selecting the best line when connecting sections of the track. We set up at the end of the high-speed-roller section chatting about who, what and why. I’d like to tell you all about it but we just don’t have page space. The section out of the rollers turned through a slight right and then went into a tight, 90-degree left. Understanding what the correct gear selection can do to help you mid-turn was



ATTENDEES' FEEDBACK

MAL DALTON

At the age of 52, to roll the bike out of the van as a student of the RCU was just as exciting as the first Stephen Gall school I did in 1981 as an 18 year old!

As a rider, it was a privilege to be a student of this program and to be trackside with these guys. I walked away with one great tip from each rider. I am now looking forward to working on these techniques for my 2016 AORC series.

Perhaps the biggest thing I took away was how headstrong these guys are. The Q&A time with the riders was a highlight for me as all of them were extremely open and honest with their answers.

It was a great day in all, awesome atmosphere right to the end.

Money well spent? Yes. Will I do it again? One hundred per cent.

MICHAEL RONNING

My background came from MTB racing. I lived in the USA for 10 years racing professionally and am still heavily involved in it. I had grown up racing mini bikes through to 125s back when Stanton was the man. Having owned MX bikes most of my life since then, this was a huge opportunity not to be missed!

My highlight, and I'm sure most people's at the school, was to listen to and watch RC demonstrate his cornering technique. It was ridiculous how fast and how easily he would rail this tiny rut and just explode out of it, over and over again. Even though he's a 150-times AMA winner, he would talk with so much passion and listen to any questions people had for him.

I really hope RCU returns for 2016. It was such an amazing experience that can't be missed. If anyone has the chance to attend one of these, I definitely recommend it.

the key here as well as keeping your leg/foot high while seated in the rut. To be honest, it was just great to be able to meet Jeff and simply listen to the way he breaks obstacles down.

Next up was Ricky Carmichael and his key instruction was riding low in a more formed-up rut and not blowing the back end of it out. Like before, it was just going to be cool to listen to what he had to say and I didn't care if I saw him ride an example. Fortunately for us, he demonstrated what he was saying and it was something to see just how precise this guy is on a motorcycle. To say he was doing it easily is a massive understatement; mind you, the bike knew that it wasn't a weekend swapper on board with its approach speed higher than my mid-straight speed and his grace through the turn making the bike look like it was using slicks on a race track! He had three attempts at the turn and formed a completely new line for us to practise in. I have watched thousands of riders from all over the world and the poise and ability he has is extremely impressive. The actual lesson was great for most of us in our group to understand it's better to ride a rut than try to annihilate it. Ricky was such a personable guy, with truly nothing being a silly question and unworthy of an answer.

Lunch break (just like breakfast) was provided by the Rocky Mountain ATV/MC guys, with more than enough supplied to feed the impressively sized crowd. While lunch was happening, instructors Carmichael, Stanton, Emig, Boothy and Urky had a very intimate Q&A session with the crowd, entertaining all types of questions – from their favourite colour to are you ever scared? This period was well worth listening to.

Our group then headed over to YAIM instructor and co-owner of Motodevelopment Shane Booth. We learned bike skill drills such as wheelies and stoppies, along with other slow-speed control techniques and



why we need to practise them religiously. It was fun just watching the guys ride around flipping their bikes over backwards and frontwards!

Our last session of the day had us learning starts with Jeff Emig on a second-hand-looking start gate at Coolum. He taught us some pretty basic techniques but they were all that obvious we'd probably never realised we weren't using them anymore. I could feel my starts getting better straight away. Mind you, Jeff had me eating dust when I thought I'd challenge him to a heads-up start race. I'm sure it was because I was on a 250 and not a 450 like him, but he didn't need to mono the whole length of the straight with his legs out! That did demoralise me a little...

With all the lessons over, it was time for the afternoon free ride sessions where we had a chance to ride side by side with the "big dogs" and practise everything we'd learned while trying to stay with them for at least one turn. There is truly so much more than just the track time when you come to these types of events and, in future, if you get the opportunity, I strongly recommend trying to take part in an RCU training day.

Shortly after the free ride finished it was time for the diploma ceremony, including a huge bunch of giveaways and then an "I'll sign it" session, where people got to meet their instructors and have them create some personal memorabilia.

I know you won't believe me because you think I've been told to say it, but I truly had the best day of my life at a motocross track. I'm not sure if it was the simple fact that I felt special having the whole kit and dice thrown at me, or the fact that I met Ricky and he wasn't just like all the other incredibly talented world athletes I've met that start every sentence with "Me", "I'm" or "Listen to me". It was quite refreshing to see just how well mannered and personable he was – not to mention that I knew most of the industry guys there, so it was an s-load of fun just to ride with them.

It's something I will take with me for life but I did learn a few things and I don't really think I wasted anyone's time. If anything, it's made me keen to head out and ride more motocross! Thanks so much for the invite, Gav, and a massive thanks to everyone that made it happen. **DAW**



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13-14 Feb >	Emerald
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STOR



A wide-angle photograph of a dirt road winding through a lush green valley. The road is light brown and curves from the foreground into the distance. The valley is filled with green grass and scattered trees. In the background, there are rolling hills and a sky filled with large, white and grey clouds. The overall scene is bright and scenic.

M

**TAKING THE LONG, LONG, LONG
WAY TO JINDABYNE WHILE THE
STORM GODS DO THEIR WORST**

STORY AND PICS BY **DAMIEN ASHENHURST**

Raceers



Come for an adventure ride, said Clubby. It'll be fun, said Clubby. And who was I to argue? I have a helmet, boots and gear, so what was stopping me? Oh yeah... I didn't have a bike. So I rang my old man, who just bought a Suzuki V-Strom 650, and asked him if I could borrow it. The bike hadn't done any serious riding yet; it was shiny and fresh and I reckoned it was about time it got a taste of the offroad. It was running Bridgestone Trailwing tyres, which are a solid choice for dirt road and milder trail stuff in the dry. I figured it would be fine because I had convinced myself it wouldn't rain.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

The ride was to start in the NSW town of Marulan. I live in Newcastle, so my morning ride constituted a 4am on-the-bike-start and a boring ride down the freeway to meet the rest of the guys. The ride is called the Ride to the Snowy Ride and it is exactly what it says it is. The annual Snowy Ride was to take place from Jindabyne that weekend, with thousands of road bike riders piling into the little alpine town for the huge charity event. We were riding to that ride, hence the name. We weren't taking part in it, just riding to where it starts.

On the face of it, the route seems pointless. Riding from Marulan to





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SUZUKI
FINANCE



Jindabyne should take about three hours but in the hands of adventure-master Clubb, the course was stretched out to 800km of changing tracks and trails and some excellent scenery.

WEATHER REPORT, PLEASE

As we took off from the start point, I couldn't help but notice the clouds forming in a dark Trailwing-hating formation directly in our path. Surely it'll be blown away by the time we get there, right?

And for most part we did avoid the rain and wind and lightning and all manner of heavenly hell that was raining down around us.

The ride was made up mainly of a selection of Yamaha Ténérés of the 1200 and 660 species, two V-Stroms and one immaculate Honda XR650 that was undoubtedly the star of the motorised show.

The water crossings were all kind to us and at one point the sky opened up to show an expanse of pastoral land that warms the heart and reminds us all why we do this. We stopped at all the critical stops, for fuel and pies, and eventually came to a totally innocent-looking dirt road outside of Nimmitabel. You know that movie *Gremlins*? About the cute, fluffy creature with the angelic singing voice that turns into a man killer if it gets fed after midnight? That's what this road was. It looked cute and fluffy until we fed it a few adventure bikes and it turned into the meanest, slipperiest road the world has ever seen. Even as I was sliding sideways and the bike — my dad's new bike — started to fall ever so slowly, I couldn't understand how this road was doing this. It just didn't look that bad at all. I hit the ground on my left side and managed to scoop up a few kilos of red clay with the V-Strom's crash bars. I busted a handguard and scratched the tank... someone's going to be pissed. The best part of this was that the road was 15km long and we had eight to go!

We regathered at the other side. I looked at the

Trailwings and cursed their existence when I really had only myself to blame — but who doesn't blame their equipment?

I wasn't the only one to hit the deck and it took a little bit to get everyone sorted and back on track. It was funny as hell, truth be told, and a couple of passing cops had a laugh knowing full well what that road was like wet.

KILLER ACCOMMODATION

From that point on it was race-the-storms time. A slight course adjustment and we were off as a mammoth cloud bank squared down on us. It eventually caught us just outside of Jindabyne but we made it through a brief squall intact. I arrived at my accommodation, which was a creepy bed and breakfast that was a little too 'serial killer' for my liking. They told me I wasn't allowed to use the kitchen, so I went back into Jindy for food and the heavens opened up with furious vengeance. My pizza was a soggy starch disc by the time I got back to my room at Jeffrey Dahmer's house.

The ride proved that with just two days to spare and with guys like Clubby and Clive Ward setting the route, you can have a real adventure. It also reinforced the fact that you shouldn't borrow your dad's bike and ride it unprepared. But as far as a fun couple of days goes, it was a cracker. There's nothing like a good, long day on a bike to clear your mind and get away from mobile devices and office cubicles. Sign me up for 2016... and get me some new tyres. *DA*

IN THE HANDS OF ADVENTURE-MASTER CLUBB, THE COURSE WAS STRETCHED OUT TO 800KM OF CHANGING TRACKS AND TRAILS AND SOME EXCELLENT SCENERY





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SEF-R



There's something to really love about the Sherco brand here in Australia. It's a small fish in a big sea, fighting it's way to becoming a class-leader in the Australian market – the classic underdog archetype so adored by us Aussies. Since Mojo Motorcycles took over the importation rights of the brand, the company has continued to promote the quality motorcycles and help take them to the masses. It's one thing to have an awesome motorcycle but if it's not readily available, or if the manufacturer can't provide parts and accessory support, it's a hard sell to a bloke over a beer at the pub. Some serious steps have been taken by the team at Sherco Motorcycles Australia to achieve this and, as a result, the Sherco 450 SEF-R will be landing on many shopping lists in 2016. Haven't considered a Sherco? I would.

BUILT FOR COMPETITION, THE 2016 SHERCO 450 SEF-R IS READY TO TAKE IT TO THE BIG GUNS.

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT BERNARD

TESTING TIME

We rounded up three vastly different riders and headed to a well-rounded location to put the Sherco 450 SEF-R to the test. These riders include Shane Booth, ex-professional motocross racer and one of Australia's leading coaches; Wil Ruprecht, one of Australia's fastest up-and-coming enduro racers; and myself, the average Aussie clubman rider/racer.

Sitting on the stand, the Sherco 450 SEF-R looks like a factory race weapon. Its blue and fluoro colour combination looks straight-up hot. Rolling into a trail ride with one of these will turn heads like a busty blonde in a country pub.

I was pleasantly surprised when first swinging a leg over the Sherco. The cockpit has a flat, modern feeling and at first glance, everything is of top quality. Oversized handlebars, electric start, quality

grips, hydraulic clutch and a sleek instrument panel are all at your fingertips. The triple clamps are adjustable if you are far removed from the average-sized rider, while the seat is a good-quality gripper.

The footpeg-to-handlebar-to-seat ratio is on the smaller, more compact side of the 450 enduro range — something that is a tick in the box for flick ability in the tight trails. A higher seat foam might be a worthy investment for someone seriously tall, otherwise some testing with the adjustable triple clamps would help the comfort factor. After firing the 450 into life via the keyless starting system you are treated to a throaty-sounding 450 with a decent tone out of the exhaust, but it's nothing too loud or annoying when trail riding. The speed of the throttle response is quickly noted after a few twists of the right wrist. It's a winner.



450 SEF-R FAST FACTS FOR 2016

COMPACT ENGINE DESIGN

- Gear train
- Morse/HYVO distribution
- Dual overhead cams
- New piston/connecting rod
- Weight and inertia reduction
- Results in better bike traction, higher RPMs and longer engine life

ADJUSTMENT OF INJECTION MAPPING

- Improve performance
- Reduced fuel consumption
- Compatible with the keyless system
- Better progressivity obtained
- Mapping developed for the new piston/connecting rod system

NEW BALANCE SHAFT

- Weight and inertia reduction
- Results in better bike traction, higher RPMs and longer engine life

KEYLESS SYSTEM

- Contact button removed
- No risk of dead battery in case the switch is accidentally left ON

EVOLUTION OF AIR BOX DESIGN

- Easier access to air filter
- Air box space increased, wiring protected

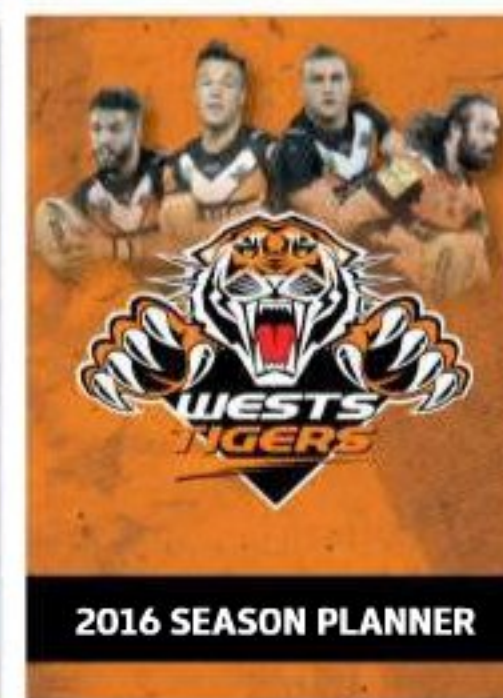
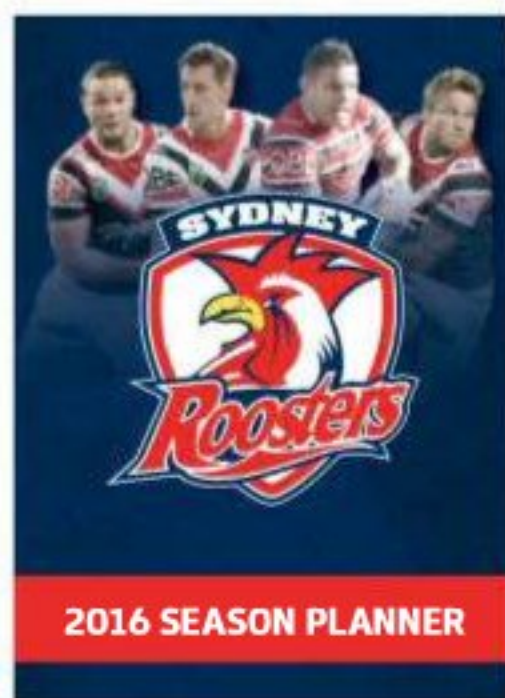
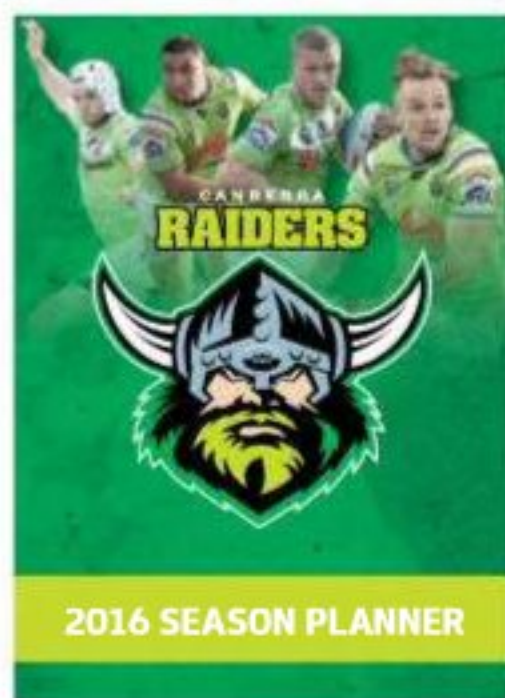
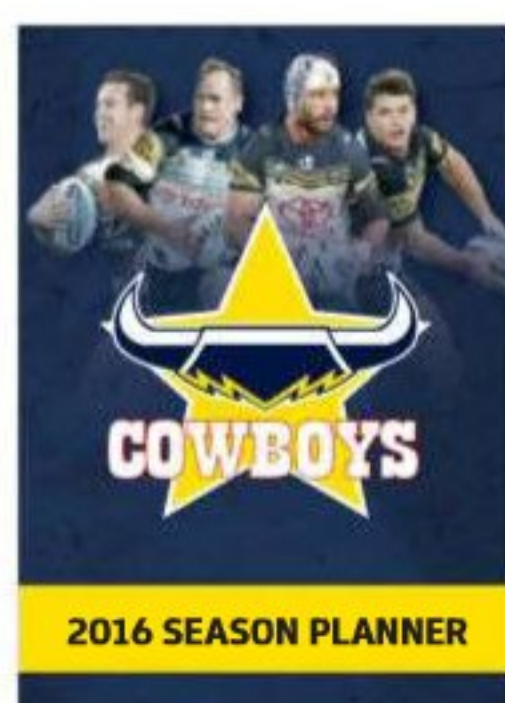
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A SHERCO? I WOULD.**





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450

INTO THE TRAIL

I headed straight into a tight and technical section. My initial feelings were that this bike definitely lingers on the competition side of the scale. The chassis is rigid and the suspension firm — it's an almost motocross-like-feeling chassis. The handling is precise and sharp when the going gets tight, which is a little tip of the cap to the brand's trials heritage.

Out on the open trails, the engine does its best work in the mid-range. The bike has a strong engine and with a little clutch it truly comes to life. It had power to burn in the sandy trails and more than enough to lug my 95kg frame around without being a scary, aggressive engine. The power curve has a broader, more 500-like power to it; there's no huge punch of grunt, nor is it shifted all to the top end. It's strong and smooth — just the way it's meant to be.

The 450 SEF-R is equipped with an engine map switch — something that is worth its weight in gold. For a rider who is after a smooth, easily managed power plant, flick the curve to the smooth setting. When looking for more punch, the power setting opens up the



SPECIFICATIONS

- Engine Type: 4-stroke DOHC, 4-valve Sherco technology
- Displacement: 449.40 cc
- Bore X Stroke: 95 x 63.40mm
- Fuel system: Synerject digital electronic fuel injection
- Cooling: Liquid system with forced circulation
- Starting: Unique electric starting system
- Battery: 12V/4Ah Yuasa
- Exhaust: Stainless-steel header pipe, stainless-steel muffler with catalytic converter meets Euro 3 stds
- Transmission: 6-speed sequential gearbox, primary gear drive chain secondary drive
- Clutch: Hydraulic, multidisc in oil bath
- Frame: Half-perimeter frame Chrome-Molybdenum
- Fuel Tank: 8.5L fuel tank
- Brakes: Brembo Hydraulic Ø 260 mm (10.24 in) (front) Ø 220 mm (8.66 in) (rear)
- Front Suspension: WP telescopic fork, Ø 48 mm (1.89in) tubes rebound and compression adjustable 300 mm (11.81in) of travel
- Rear Suspension WP progressive, multi-adjustable rear shock utilising a linkage and rod system, 330 mm of travel
- Weight: 110kg (242.51lb)

SEF-R

ROLLING INTO A
TRAIL RIDE WITH
ONE OF THESE
WILL TURN HEADS
LIKE A BUSTY
BLONDE IN A
COUNTRY PUB.



SECOND OPINION

WIL RUPRECHT

One of the standout features I found when getting comfortable with the Sherco was how narrow it was for an enduro bike through the seat/tank region. From previous experience I have found this feature contradicts a stable, trustworthy bike throughout rough sections – not with the 450 Sherco, though. Initially, the engine feels as though it is restricted and a little fluffy until you start exploring the mid/top-end section of the power curve. Adjusting the mapping situated on your right thumb makes for the best of both worlds while out on the trail. Even with the European-style, half-size knob rear tyre, the Sherco 450 was torquey enough to wheelie out of the deeper sandy berms while getting maximum traction. If you were to buy an exhaust system, lower bar mounts and change the suspension settings, this bike would make for a competitive ride at a race meeting.

bike's true capabilities. I could see a real use for this in real-world trail riding. If it's a dark, slippery, tree-root-littered under-canopy you're picking your way through, flick it back to smooth mode. This will provide fewer tendencies to create wheel spin and, in turn, give a more forgiving ride. Once you escape the underworld of darkness, flick it back to the more aggressive map and let the bike bite into some traction and roost into the rest of your day's riding.

The hydraulic clutch has a nice, smooth action and I didn't experience any issues or fading with it. Meanwhile, the brakes also get a tick in the performance category.

The only issue I had with the Sherco 450 SEF-R was the front end's busy nature at high speed, but this is something that needs to be taken into consideration, not just frowned upon. Thanks to a light-feeling front end the bike is a quick-turning, agile beast between the trees. If you are doing a lot of high-speed riding, a suspension tune or steering damper would be on your shopping list. It was by no means scary – never once did I need to back it down – it just has a light feeling to it. With plenty of time on the bike, you may well become completely used to it.

WOULD I BUY ONE?

I was driving home from the test and had a pretty big smile slapped on my dial. I also spoke to a few buddies on the way home and in the coming days, each of whom asked the same thing: would you buy one? In short, yes. Yes, I would. My fear of owning a bike from a brand such as Sherco in the past has been dealer availability and spare parts. The dealer network is growing and according to the Sherco team, spare parts are far from a problem and are readily available. It's only 20 minutes from my house to one of the leading Sherco dealers, so a short trip in the car for a Sydney local will lead you to a dealer.

The last issue would be resale. There's not as many Shercos as there are (for example) Yamaha WR450Fs on Bike Sales, so the resale could rear its head down the track. Just as with all dirtbikes, however, you'll always lose a bit of money.

The simple fact that it's not orange or white but is still European and of high quality and performance will be enough to raise the excitement and interest of many Australian trailriders – if nothing else, it allows them to be different from their mates. If you haven't ridden one, get along to one of Sherco's ride days – you won't be disappointed. **LOW**



FROM

THE

WE SIT DOWN WITH ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST SUCCESSFUL MOTOCROSS RIDERS FOR HIS TAKE ON THE SPORT FROM THE RETIRED SIDE OF THE FENCE.

OTHER SIDE

STORY **MATT BERNARD**
PHOTOGRAPHY **DA ARCHIVES**



Jay Marmont will forever be a name etched in the Australian motocross history books. One of the most determined racers we have ever seen, Jay's career highlight of winning four straight Australian Motocross Championships will be one of the greatest streaks for a long time to come. Jay has since hung up the boots, dabbled in some racing, spent some time working a full-time job and is now focused on improving the up-and-coming racers in our country.

Let's start at the top — what's been happening since you hung up the boots?

Just trying to find myself. It was pretty tough last year sitting on the other side of the fence. So I've been doing a few things: coaching a few kids, doing some ride schools. I've started Next Level Coaching, so hopefully that will be around a little more now and I can get that out there a bit more. I was driving my dad's truck and working in the coalmines just to pay the bills, but I'm more passionate about the young riders and some of the pros coming through at the moment.

How hard is it going from a life that's dedicated to winning to changing your mindset and not racing anymore? Is it a difficult process?

For me, it is. I've raced my whole life and I guess just getting up on a Sunday when there's a race on at Appin and not going is kind of weird. I was helping Yarrive Konsky out with his team at the start of last year and

after the first round I just couldn't do it — so I quit. I found it really hard being on the side of the track and helping out the riders I used to battle with. It was too much too early. I gave that a miss and went a different direction, so now I'm just trying to find myself and work out the best way to go.

Some riders end up with a job within the motorcycle industry but others step away never to be seen again. Is it easy to understand why some people step away?

Yeah, and I probably [regret] a couple of decisions I made now, you know? I was with Yamaha and I kind of turned my back on them and went with Kawasaki and then went back with Honda. If I stayed with Yamaha they might have found another role for me but with Kawasaki, they are very planted with Troy (Carroll). At the time, I wasn't thinking or worried about my career ending — I was just focused on winning races — so I guess it can be a pretty cut-throat industry in that regard.

You've stepped away from racing but are trying to create a job within motocross. Has the industry supported you since you stopped racing or is it hard to get those return phone calls now?

No, not really. I think you need to get out there and create your own opportunity within the sport and I've tried doing that with a few companies, but the way budgets are at the moment people are pretty happy with what they have locked in. To be honest, I thought

I REALLY WANT TO GET MY COACHING GOING AND JUST DO A FEW RACES





WINNERS WHO HAVE LEFT AND COME BACK TO BE WINNERS ONCE AGAIN DOESN'T SURPRISE ME ONE BIT

someone would have rung me by now and found a role as a team manager or something like that, but I don't think the teams can get much support off manufacturers and the likes as it is. As for helping out riders who want the knowledge and the support that I can offer, I have a few guys in that regard. My wife runs a CrossFit gym in Wollongong, NSW, and that is going well and a few riders go there, but most riders shy away from that training a little or don't have the money for it.

Did you manage to get down to the AUS-X Open? What were your thoughts on that style of event coming to Australia?

I did and I think it was one of the best events I have been to for a long time. As far as Adam Bailey and his team went, they promoted the event really well. Chad (Reed) and Ricky Carmichael were so professional and when the Aussie riders stepped up, I thought Dan Reardon rode well and so did Lawson Bopping, who stepped up to take it to Reedy.

Speaking of Dan, does it impress you now stepping away that he has come back at the level he is at?

Yes and no. My thoughts are that a winner will always be a winner. Dan has been there and won before. People are surprised when they see a winner come back. You know Ben Townley is going overseas and he will be up there. Winners who have left and come back to be winners once again don't surprise me one bit to be honest. It's hard to fight away a winner.

Does that then keep the fire in your belly to race again?

It does. You know, there were talks about maybe running my own gig with my brother and I was trying to get something going with his shop, MXR&D, and Husqvarna and pull something off. But the budget isn't quite there. We put a proposal to them but are still waiting to hear back. Never say never, though. I'm still fit — it would just be a matter of putting my head down. The thought's always there, I guess. I'm only 32, so I could probably give myself until 35 to do something within racing. But, for now, I really want to get my coaching going and just do a few races — probably not a championship, just one-off races. I did one in Perth but my fitness wasn't there because I was working in the mines. If I'm on the bike more and coaching, it will give me more time to get bike fit and do some more training.

From the outside looking in, who do you see as the next guys to step up in 2016?

I see it as a really open playing field at the moment. Obviously, Matt Moss will be there with a point to prove and has won as many as I have, maybe not in the open class but in Australia. With the Yamaha boys, Dacka has the most championships out of any team manager, so he's got a point to prove with Dean Ferris. And then you've got the defending champions with the KTM boys, so they will want to go back to back with Gibbs. I don't see anyone dominating for a few years; I see it being pretty even. But I do see a lot of injuries — I think a lot of guys are going to be pushing pretty hard and the field might thin out towards the end of the year, so it will probably be the guy who can be solid throughout the whole series.

What are your thoughts on the industry moving forward now, seeing it from a different perspective?

I think the AUS-X Open is what the sport needed. Kevin's MX Nationals series is a good, consistent series and you know the formats, the locations, everything well in advance, but I think the Supercross needed something like the AUS-X Open. What the guys did that night was awesome. Fingers crossed that those guys have more in their plans and hopefully more guys like Ricky Carmichael can come out and help promote the sport more and help the industry continue to go from strength to strength. **END**

10 SET-UP TIPS

– 2016 WR 250F

SHARPEN UP YOUR 2016 WR 250F WITH THESE 10 TWEAKS

STORY **SHANE BOOTH** PHOTOGRAPHY **MATT BERNARD**

1. SET YOUR RIDE HEIGHT

Get the pre-load right on the shock before you head out. A good range for the ride height on this bike is 105-108mm. This is also a good way to get an idea of whether the standard spring rate is correct for you. Don't underestimate the importance of setting this up – it affects your handling package as a whole and is well worth the effort.

2. HAND GUARDS

Personally, I'm a fan of open-ended, motocross-style hand guards and so are many off-road riders. Choose a quality set that has a good mount system so the hand guards are solid and don't flex around too much. Most will have a plastic mount and some brands offer an alloy version as an option.

3. FRONT BRAKE

A 270mm front rotor will beef up the brake performance and is not going to blow the budget. It's one of the best bang-for-your-buck bolt-on items you can run with.

4. MUFFLER

If you are looking for performance gains, an aftermarket muffler will help the bike breathe. There are plenty to choose from, including offerings from GYTR, Yamaha's in-house performance arm. We have provided a specific Power Tuner map that has been developed with a GYTR muffler below.

5. CHAIN GUIDE

If you're going to get serious with your trail riding, it's a good idea to switch out the standard alloy chain guide with an aftermarket plastic or nylon version. These will absorb impacts well and not bend and stay out of shape. They will flex and return to their original position, meaning you won't have chain-derailment issues.

6. POWER TUNER MAP

Here is an updated map that improves performance and responsiveness when a GYTR aftermarket muffler is fitted.

FUEL	IGNITION
5 3 2	1-2 0
4 2 1	0-1 0
4 4 2	0 0 0

7. GRIPS

The standard grips have improved over the past few years and there are plenty of options out there to choose from. Grips are a relatively cheap way to increase your comfort levels if you are heading out on long rides in the bush. A pair of neoprene grip donuts is also a popular addition and can save the skin on your thumbs.

8. RADIATOR BRACES

A simple tip-over can prove to not only be a costly exercise but also leave you stranded on the trail with damaged radiators. Radiator braces are a pretty cheap insurance policy to save your radiators and potentially a fried engine.

9. AIR FILTER

An aftermarket air filter that allows improved air flow is an inexpensive and easy way to gain some performance on the WR. Make sure you choose a good-quality air filter oil to pair up with it.

10. AIR BOX

Drilling some additional holes into the air box will increase air flow and, in turn, the bike's performance. If you remove the fuel tank, you can add some holes to the face of the air box which will help and go unnoticed once the tank and seat are refitted. It's a go-to mod for many of the off-road racers piloting a WR 250F. All bikes improve with better air in and out of the engine but the WR seems to respond even better than most. **DA**





MOTO MANUAL

STUFF YOU NEED
TO KNOW
AND SOME STUFF
YOU DON'T

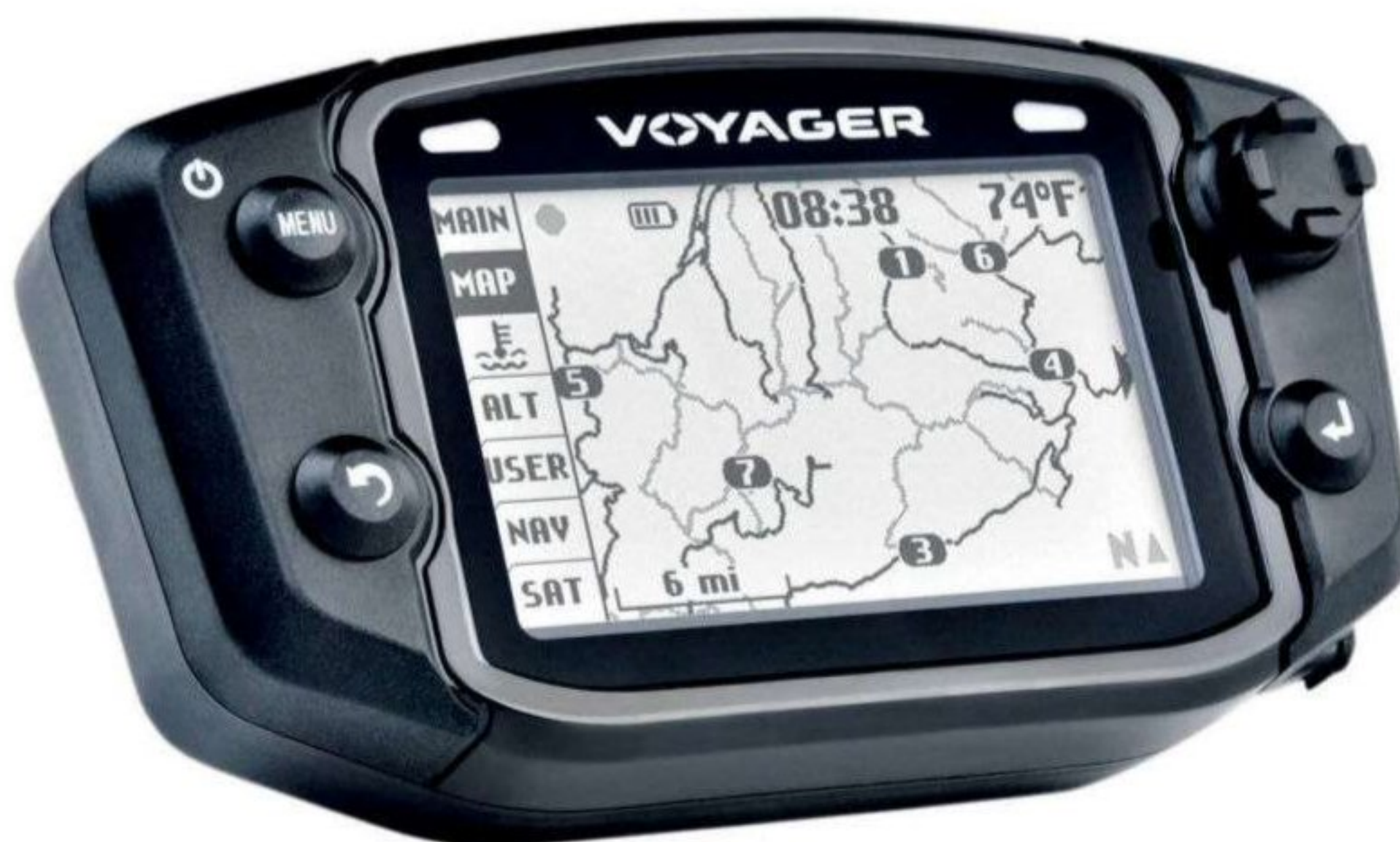
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02 **Tough** — the Voyager is built to take some hard knocks and keep performing.

03 **Intuitive** — it's not hard to use at all. It's not hard to install, either.



04 **Affordable** — it's not too pricey compared to other motorcycle GPS units but it offers things they would never dream of.

05 **All-in-one** — make tracks or follow tracks and open up a whole world of navigation. Bundle in a huge amount of real-time riding info — from engine temperature to speed, location and time or tachometer.

DIRT SHOP

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- V-430 "Sleek" visor
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- "Sleek" mouthpiece
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- Stable, three-point leg system creates a solid base, capable of handling most bikes



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TROY LEE DESIGNS 2016 SE STARBURST KTM BLUE/ ORANGE GEAR SET

JERSEY FEATURES:

- Ventilated polyester mesh back
- Ventilated polyester mesh sleeves
- Breathable, stretch polyester materials
- Sewn-in elbow padding
- Gel print on tail keeps jersey in place
- Four-way stretch collar and cuffs

PANTS FEATURES:

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- Articulated fit for performance
- Ratchet closure system for waist
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- Two-way stretch panels at rear knee, calf and crotch
- Sliding rear yoke stretch system keeps pants in place



2017 FORD RAPTOR

It just looks like it should have a dirtbike in the back.



GT BICYCLES SPEED SERIES PRO

The lightest aluminium race frame on the market features race-ready geometry and quick-change dropouts so you are ready for every condition the day throws your way.



JUNIOR GEAR



KTM Red Bull Factory Racing Team Truck

- 1:32 scale model of Peterbilt KTM Factory Racing Team Truck "Red Bull" by New Ray
- Rubber tyres
- Detailed interior, exterior
- Opening doors and rear gate
- Cabin is metal, the rest is plastic
- Dimensions approximately L-22, W-3, H-5.5 inch



SHIFT 2016 — Youth Assault Jersey

- Technical, moisture-wicking polyester and mesh fabrics throughout
- Four-panel construction
- Technical collar design
- Relaxed fit with drop tail
- Fade-resistant sublimated graphic



ALPINESTARS RACER SUPERMATIC MOTOCROSS YOUTH KIDS GLOVES

- Lightweight, single-piece spandex upper construction
- Suede palm for breathability
- Reinforced thumb design for increased durability
- Velcro wrist adjustment for a safe, customised fit
- Silicone grip patterning on fingers and palm for improved riding control
- Synthetic suede pull tab for better fit and easier entry



Smooth Industries Chad Reed Backpack

- Durable 600D polyester fabric
- Skateboard carrying straps
- Full graphics including a photo of Chad and several of his team's sponsor logos
- Multiple pockets, including one main compartment with a padded laptop pocket
- A soft tricort-lined pocket to help protect media devices or sunglasses
- Two side pockets (one mesh and one solid)
- Padded shoulder straps and back panel for added comfort



100 per cent Accuri YOUTH MX Motocross Goggles in Fluoro Yellow

- Same lens and tear-off profile
- Curvature suited for comfort
- Triple-layer moisture-managing foam
- Anti-fog-coated Lexan lens
- 45mm-wide elastic strap
- Flexible urethane frame

DIRT ACTION FIND-A-WORD

Time to put your thinking hats on, kids. See if you can find all of our words hidden in the box below. Remember, the words can go forwards, backwards and diagonally.

N	E	G	J	K	Y	S	Q	M	O	T	O
W	O	B	U	A	G	U	E	D	B	U	V
S	B	V	M	W	B	P	H	I	V	V	Y
E	E	W	P	A	R	E	O	R	U	I	R
N	R	H	J	S	A	R	L	T	O	M	I
N	M	E	X	A	A	C	E	B	F	N	Y
I	W	V	R	K	P	R	S	I	G	O	A
Y	H	G	E	I	W	O	H	K	K	T	M
H	O	Z	E	X	N	S	O	E	L	S	A
W	O	K	D	N	L	S	T	E	V	F	H
Y	P	X	K	R	E	A	R	D	O	N	A
G	S	U	Z	U	K	I	J	M	O	S	S

BERM
BRAAP
DIRTBIKE
HOLESHOT
JUMP

KAWASAKI
KTM
MOSS
MOTO
REARDON

REED
SUPERCROSS
SUZUKI
WHOOPS
YAMAHA



ACERBIS VISION HANDGUARD

The innovative Vision hand guard is fitted with adjustable LED lights (with a low power consumption running off 4W per side), giving you effective, additional light for extreme conditions. In addition to a headlight, the hand guards provide further visibility both at night and during the day with a combined luminous efficiency of 300 lumens.



LAVAZZA ESPRESSGO

Espressgo is Lavazza's first travel espresso maker that lets you brew real Italian espresso on the move — perfect for a mid-adventure caffeine hit. All you need is access to a 12V power supply.



SPOT TRACKER GEN 3

S.O.S: With the push of a button, the GEOS International Emergency Response Coordination Centre provides your GPS coordinates and information to local response teams — for example contacting 911 responders in North America and 000 responders in Australia. The S.O.S button is for emergencies only.

Check In: Let family and friends know you're OK when you're out of phone range. Send a pre-programmed text message with GPS coordinates or an email with a link to Google Maps to your contacts with your location. With a push of a button, a message is sent via email or SMS to up to 10 pre-determined contacts and your waypoint is stored in your SPOT account for later reference. Your stored waypoints can be easily integrated into a SPOT shared page or SPOT Adventure account.

Help/SPOT Assist: Alert your personal contacts that you need help in non-life-threatening situations. Or, use SPOT Assist for professional services on land. (Additional service required.)

Custom Message: Stay in touch while off the grid by sending your custom message. Set up a message before leaving to send to contacts with your GPS location. Use this feature as a secondary OK message or transfer your personal help alert to this message function if you are using a SPOT Assist service on your Help button.

Tracking: Allow friends and family to follow your progress online in near real-time and save waypoints so you can review your entire route at a later date.

WHERE THE BLACKTOP ENDS AND THE DIRT PICKS UP, THE WORLD BECOMES AN ADVENTURE PARK FOR THE FREE SPIRIT



MOTOHANSA PRO SERIES MULTI-RATCHET SET

Motohansa's Pro Series multi-ratchet set is a unique multi-tool, delivering socket, Torx, E socket, and screwdriver functions all in the one tool. Its compact size is designed to easily fit under seat or in pannier.

Features include:

- Phillips bits - PH1, PH2
- Poz bits - PZ1, PZ2, PZ3
- Torx bits - T10, T15, T20, T25, T30, T40
- E-Star sockets - 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10mm
- Hex sockets - 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13mm
- Magnetic bit holder
- Multi-ratchet handle (with storage for 2 x bit magazines)
- 1 x pouch
- 2 x socket rails



BMW GS CARBON HELMET

The all-new BMW GS adventure-riding helmet boasts a carbon shell and a wind-tunnel-tested shape to optimise rider comfort and minimise drag. Optional visors are also available.

Features include:

- Enduro helmet with fibre-reinforced shell of 100 per cent carbon fibre
- Impact-absorbing EPS inner liner
- Aerodynamically optimised, removable helmet visor
- Aerodynamically effective spoiler
- Effective ventilation system
- Removable chin flap for unblocked flow-through during off-road riding
- Double visor for optimum anti-fogging
- Removable, washable liner

ACERBIS ADVENTURE JACKET

Acerbis' Adventure jacket is the Swiss army knife of touring jackets. A removable quilted inner lining and a UREAMAX membrane with 5000/5000ml waterproofing allow this jacket to be worn in a variety of weather conditions. It features zip-off sleeves for warmer weather, articulated elbows for comfort, multiple vents to stay cool and deep cargo pockets to pack tools. The Adventure jacket is all you need to conquer the trails. It also attaches to Acerbis' Adventure pants with an internal three-quarter body zipper.



ACERBIS ADVENTURE PANTS

Acerbis' Adventure dual-road/sport pants are made out of a waterproof, durable, high-density polyester material and feature a quilted membrane that is removable based on weather conditions. Additional ventilation located on the hips enables air-flow when needed, while an adjustable hook and button closure and adjustable elastic straps at the waist allow for a comfortable fit. The pants also have two pockets and front and rear reflective inserts. They attach to either the Adventure or Creek jackets with a three-quarter body waist zipper.

CAUSEWAYS

CAUSEWAYS CAN BE VERY SNEAKY ASSASSINS AND MANY A MOTORCYCLE HAS BEEN LAID ON ITS SIDE THANKS TO A SLIMY ONE.

STORY SHANE BOOTH PHOTOGRAPHY BMW

There are three major things that will catch you out when crossing a causeway: complacency, lean angle and your right hand. Causeways are not always slippery; in fact, the majority of them aren't too bad, which is quite often the problem. You may ride across five or six and there is no sign of breaking traction. You get comfortable, start increasing your speed and are not too stressed about keeping the bike straight. Then you are lying in the water wondering what happened. If you hit some slippery moss and have some lean angle, there are no second chances. Lean angle may not even be what bites you, if you turn the throttle one per cent too much, the bike can begin a pirouette that you are just a passenger for. At times, you will be able to see the surface under the water, which will help you get a read on the available traction, but I've never been able to get the confidence to trust my read totally. I always err on the side of caution through these things because I've witnessed too many riders have the rug pulled out from under them. Here are my top five tips to make it across causeways drama free.

1. GET STRAIGHT

As soon as you see the causeway, start to plan a line that will allow you to enter the causeway in a straight line and with the bike upright. If that means a wide turn to get the bike straight, do that. It's worth it.

2. MOMENTUM

If it's a relatively short causeway, a good technique is to carry enough momentum into it that you can pull the clutch in and roll to the other side. By doing this, you eliminate any chance of the rear wheel breaking traction from throttle application. If it's a longer crossing, you should still try to carry some momentum and use the throttle and clutch to deliver the power to the rear wheel ever so gently.

3. GEAR SELECTION

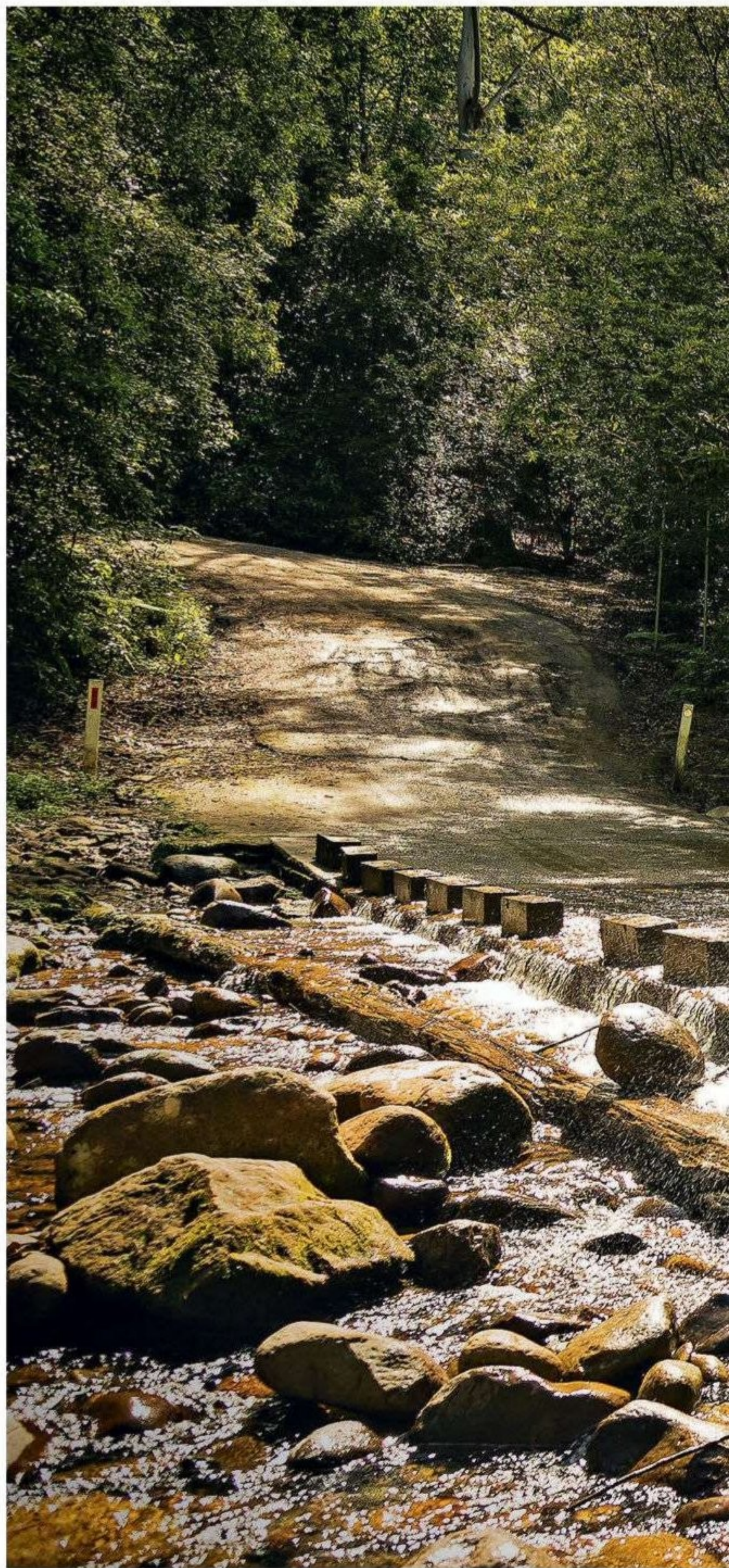
For longer crossings, try to be in the highest gear that you can be without causing the engine to stall. This will mean the power being delivered will be as smooth as possible.

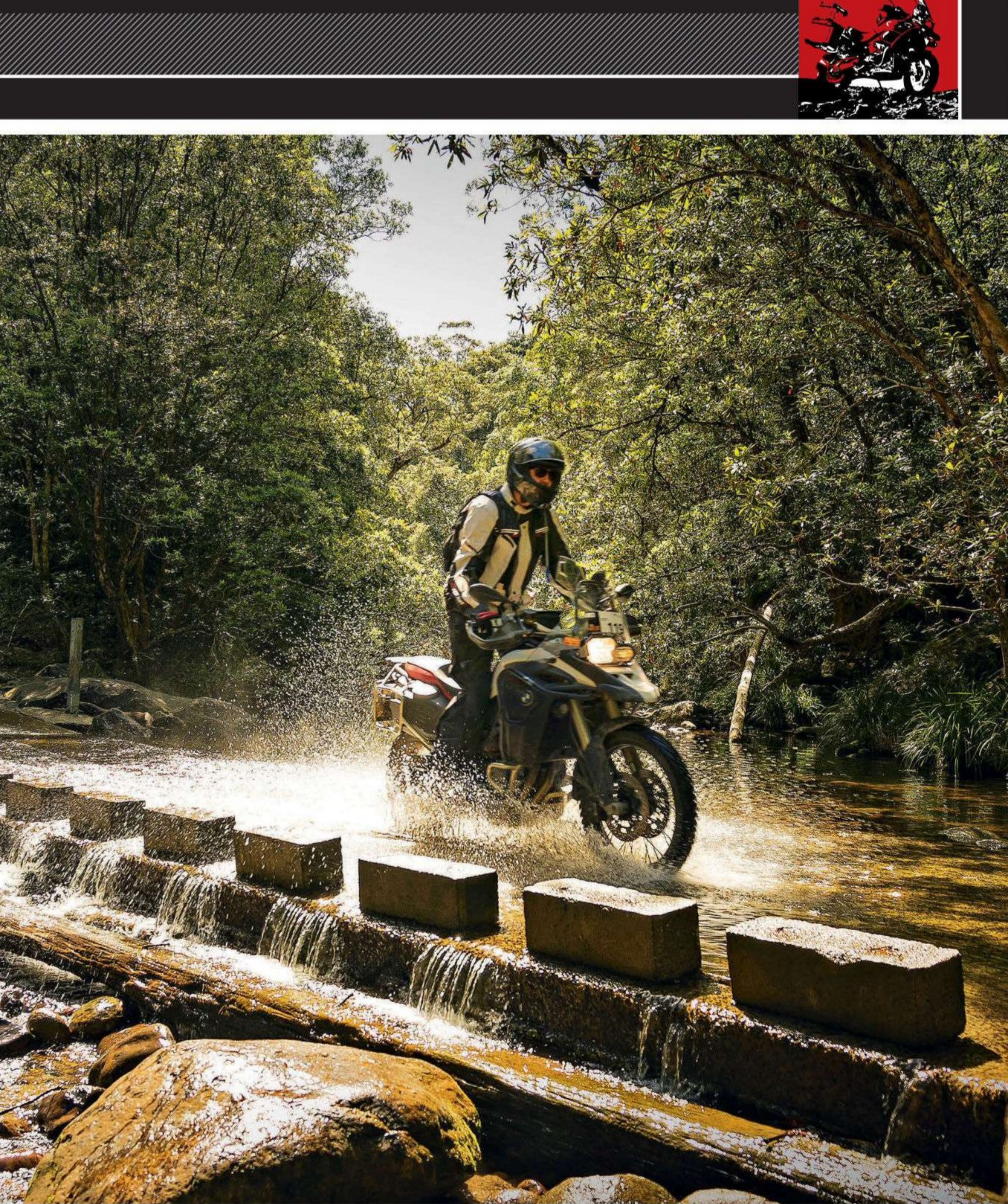
4. PICK YOUR LINE

Look for worn-in wheel tracks and pick those if you can. Most of the time, they give you the best chance of avoiding the really slick stuff. If it's a remote and rarely used crossing and doesn't have any signs of wheel tracks, I tend to stick to the centre of the crossing just to give as much room as possible if you need it.

5. THROTTLE CONTROL

If you need to apply the throttle, you will want to bring your A-game. Smooth is the order of the day and it doesn't hurt to slip the clutch to help smooth things out even further. **DA**





STEEP DESCENTS

A GOOD TECHNIQUE PAIRED WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT YOUR BIKE IS CAPABLE OF WILL HAVE YOU RIDING DOWN THINGS YOU NEVER THOUGHT WERE POSSIBLE.

STORY SHANE BOOTH PHOTOGRAPHY MATT BERNARD

Short, steep descents can be as intimidating as riding down long, technical hills. When you get to the edge of a sharp drop, it's easy to start picturing all that could go wrong; most prominently, you going over the handlebars then being closely followed by your bike for good measure. You may be surprised at what's possible to ride down when you get everything right. Let's run through the keys to staying upright and not going for a trip out the front.

SPEED

This is critical on short, steep drops. If you get this wrong, you may end up riding off the section like it's a drop off and landing at the bottom on the full. Sometimes that's an option but if it's a bigger drop than about 1.5m, the landing isn't going to be fun, especially if you accidentally ended up there. Your speed should be steady and controlled and slow enough to try to keep your wheels on the ground as you drop over the edge. You want this to happen so that your front wheel picks up the transition at the bottom and doesn't miss it and land on the flat. Don't go too slow, though, as you don't want to lose your balance or stall the bike right at the top.

GET THE PIVOT

This is key to keeping the bike the right way up. As the bike starts to change angle, let it pivot underneath you by extending your arms and leaning back. Realising the full range of movement you have as a rider is important and this is one of the reasons why: many riders feel as though they are leaning back when they may only be halfway through the possible range of movement. In this situation, you should get back far enough that you can feel the rear fender under your backside.


CONTROL YOUR SPEED

Your bike can build a large amount of speed in a short distance when you're riding down a sharp descent, so it's important to control your speed. It all depends on what you have at the bottom of the descent. If there is room to let the bike roll out then it's not a big deal, but if there is another obstacle straight away then you can't afford to have a burst of uncontrolled speed. Get it right by controlling your speed from the very top of the descent and keeping it in check the whole time. That's much better than trying to catch the speed halfway down.

THE BRAKES

Controlling the speed will require the use of both the front and rear brakes. Control the front brake with progressive use of the lever; you may be surprised at the amount of traction on offer because the front wheel is so loaded up with weight. The rear brake is important, too. It will help squat the rear down and take a little weight off the front end. Just avoid locking the rear wheel; if it does lock, release the brake and reapply.

CHOOSE YOUR BATTLES

You need to make sure that the terrain is actually rideable. There are some things that just won't work, so you need to make good decisions. When descents get vertical, you need to tread carefully – they can be conquered but only if there is a ramp-like transition at the bottom that will feed your front wheel out. If it's too square at the bottom, the front wheel will tuck under and you'll go over the handle bars. Experience will make the decisions easier to judge so, until then, try not to learn the hard way. 





SQUARING OFF A BERM

A TECHNIQUE THAT NEEDS TO BE IN YOUR RANGE OF SKILLS FOR MOTOCROSS – JUST DON'T USE IT EVERY TIME.

STORY SHANE BOOTH PHOTOGRAPHY MATT BERNARD

WHAT IS IT?

Squaring off a berm is when you make a sharp change of direction on the berm and drive the bike off in a straight line. It's a great technique for the correct situations, such as making a pass, cutting under some bumps or trying to get a longer run at an obstacle or jump. It's not great to use every time you turn the bike for the simple reason that it kills all of your mid-corner speed.

PICK YOUR ENTRY LINE

There are two ways to square off a berm: you can enter the corner on a flowing wide line and then square off the berm mid-turn or you can drive it into the corner down the inside very straight then make an even more aggressive pivot on the berm and drive it out straight. The first option works well if there is a good line in and not too many braking bumps; the wider entry will allow you to flow in with a little more speed and get the turn made easier. The second option of driving the bike in very straight works well when attempting a pass, trying to miss bumps or if the track is slippery and you want to minimise the time the bike is leant over. Read the track and pick the best option given the conditions. You will tend to yield better results if you sit down earlier than normal for this and get yourself set for the aggressive turn.

TIME TO GET AGGRESSIVE


This is an aggressive technique. To make it viable and to not lose more time than you need to, you have to ride with increased intensity. You need to drive the bike into the turn as aggressively as you can. Take advantage of the fact you are riding in on a relatively straight line, which means you can brake harder. You also have the berm to help wash off the last bit of speed. Pivoting the bike in such a small area requires some effort; you need to get the rear of the bike to slide around

and the easiest way to do this is by locking the rear wheel and skidding it around. Lean into your turn to do this well, and don't get your weight to the outside because the rear wheel will most likely get traction and stop sliding. When you get comfortable with this technique, you can actually transition from a brake slide to a power slide on exit without coming to a stop. The rear wheel will keep sliding around as long as it is either locked from the rear brake or wheel spinning from throttle input. If the brake is released or the wheel stops spinning, the slide will stop. Experienced riders can get the bike turned by using the rear brake to initiate the slide and then the throttle and clutch to finish it off; it's not easy but it's a great skill to practise and work towards.

LEFT VS RIGHT

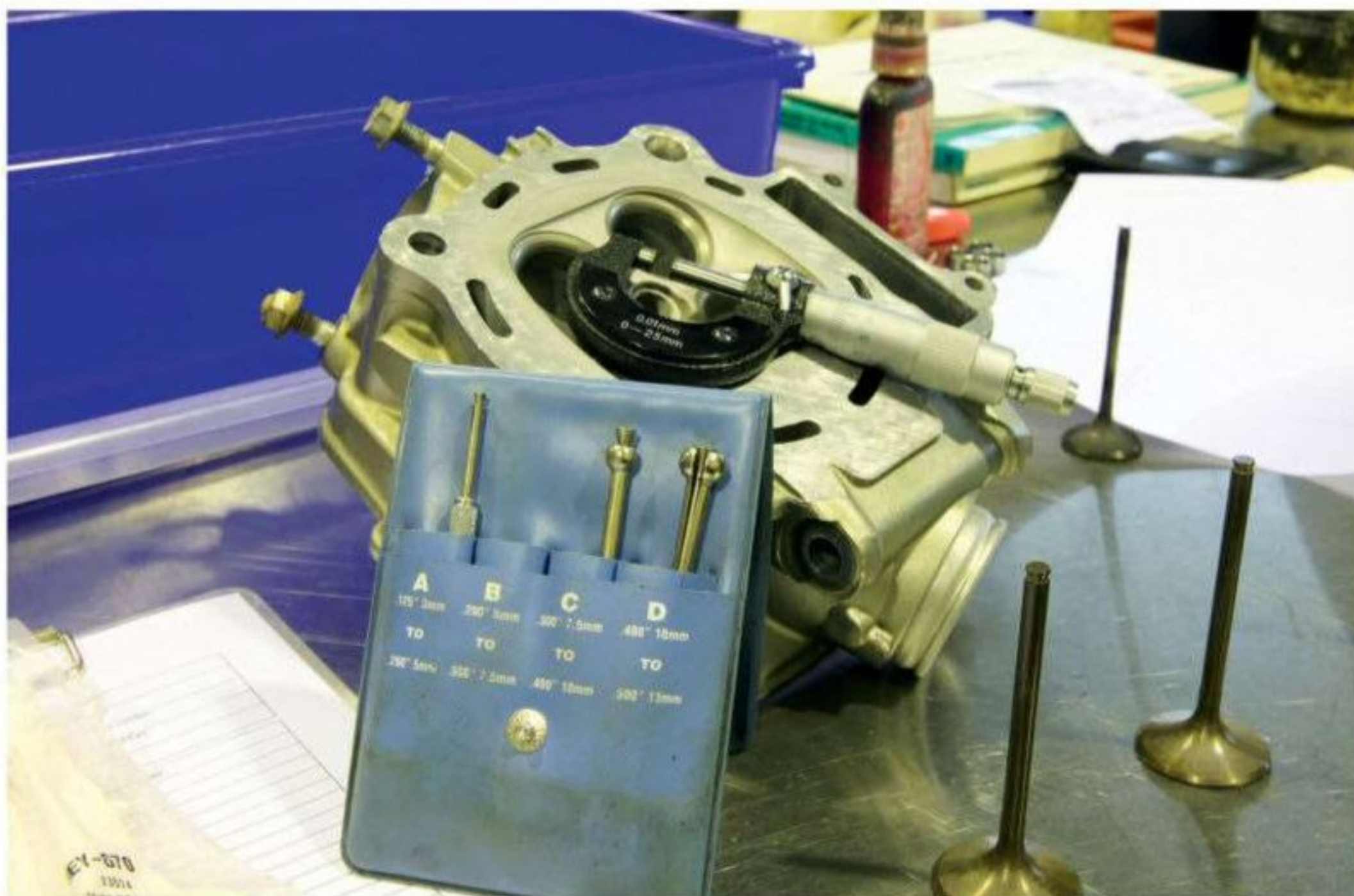
Left-handers are easier to square off than right for one simple reason: in a left hander, your foot can remain on the rear brake pedal. In a right-hand turn, you naturally want to take your foot off at some point and, when you do, you have to release the rear brake. So for right-handers, you need to be aggressive with the slide so you can get the rear of the bike around quickly and get your foot out. The only other option is to slide the bike with the throttle, which, like I mentioned, works very well but is much more difficult.

GET OUT OF THERE

This technique will give you a very straight exit off the turn, so you need to make use of it by being smooth but aggressive on the throttle. Make sure that as you turn the bike, you look at the exact exit line you want to use. Don't blow the whole technique by running wide on the exit because you let your vision run you wide. Use the fact that the line off the turn is straight, which will help offer good traction and allow you to be more aggressive than usual. 







Top-End Tales #4

SOME SPECIALISED TOOLS ARE NEEDED IF YOU REALLY WANT TO CHECK ALL THE ENGINE COMPONENT SPECIFICATIONS.

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHY MAX SULLIVAN

The valve clearance closing up was the indicator that this top end needed a freshen up. Now it's time to check the head, valve and valve seats.



EXHAUSTING

Before we cut the valve seats, the head needs to be cleaned, degreased and carbon deposits removed. The header pipe gasket will be pushed into the head and locked in with carbon. You might need a pick or similar to dislodge it. They are usually made of copper and are one-use only since they compress to make a good seal. A new gasket should be in the top-end gasket kit.



LOOSE STUD

When the header pipe was removed the nut locked onto the stud, causing it to wind out of the head. Now is a good time to fix it back in place. Use high-strength Loctite as the low or medium type is broken down too easily with heat. Wind on two nuts to the stud and lock them together. This will allow you to tighten the stud into the head. Two spanners are then used to unlock the nuts so they can be removed from the stud.



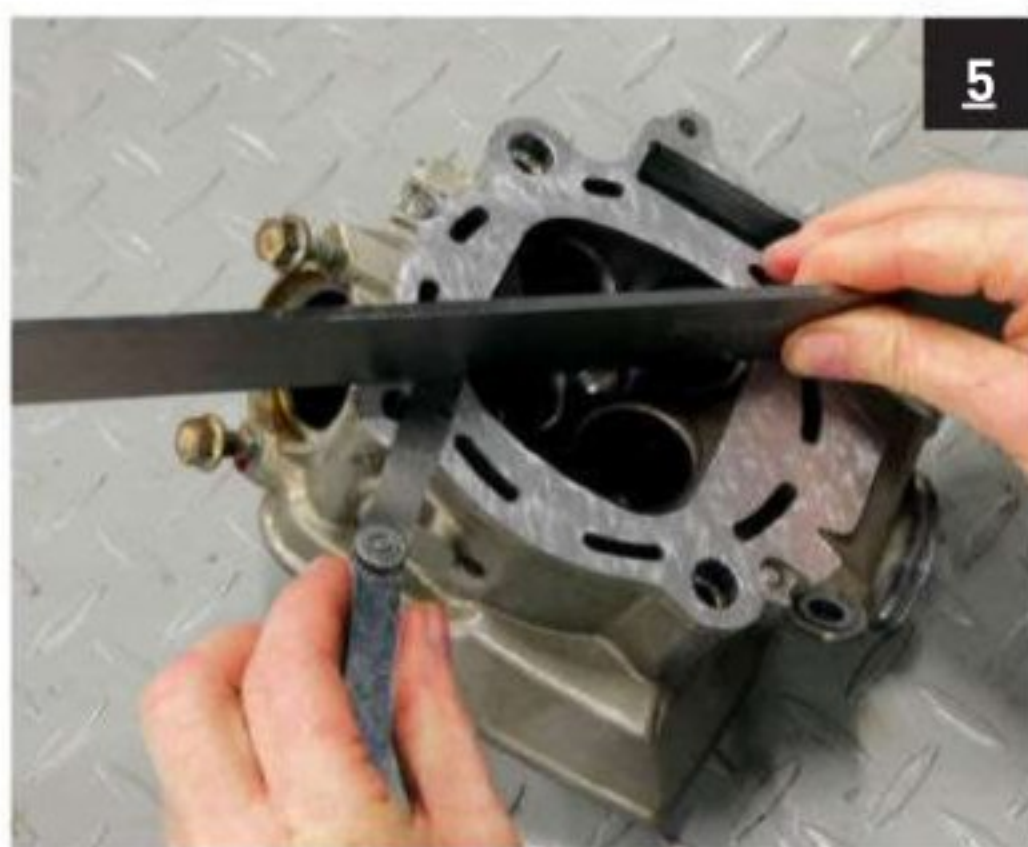
SUCK SQUEEZE

The valve on the left is the exhaust valve. It is made of harder material to withstand the high exhaust temperatures. The inlet valve is on the right. Since exhaust gas is pushed out of the cylinder, the exhaust valve is smaller. Note the valve face on the inlet valve. It is seated on the entire face of the valve instead of approximately one-third of the face. This means it is worn and needs replacing.



LINE 'EM UP

It is always good practice to replace components back in their original position when reassembling the engine. The exhaust valves are not being replaced, so place each one on some cardboard and mark it accordingly. The titanium inlet valves are worn and will be replaced. The valve springs, spring retainers and collets are also being replaced. The valve springs can lose some tension over time from heat and stress.



TIME WARP

Cylinder heads on single cylinders rarely warp, but it's good practice to check for any warping prior to reassembly. You need an accurate straight edge and a feeler gauge to check against the manufacturer's specifications. A steel ruler will not cut it as the accuracy of the reading is compromised. Once the straight edge is flat against the gasket surface, try inserting the minimum feeler gauge blade to see if the head is warped. Check in a few different angles.



BLAST ZONE

The carbon in the exhaust port and cylinder head can be cleaned using a wire brush, but a much better way is to use a bead blaster. Don't use garnet blasting material as it is too harsh on the aluminium. Glass beads work well to bring the head back to near-new condition. After cleaning, the head needs a thorough blow out with compressed air to remove all the blasting media from the coolant channels as well as bolt threads.



CROWNING GLORY

This image shows the valve seat and the three angles needed to produce a perfect valve seat angle and seat contact patch. The inner cut is the throat, the outer cut is the crown and the middle cut where the valve contacts is the seat. By varying the depth of cut on the crown and throat, the seat is repositioned on the valve. By varying the depth of cut on the seat, the seat width is adjusted. Typical angles for cuts are throat 60°, crown 30° and seat 45°.



MICROMANAGE

Other parts that wear in the cylinder head are the valve guides. These are pressed into the head but can be replaced if worn. Once they wear, the valves tend to rock a little instead of travelling directly up and down. A small bore gauge is inserted into the guide and adjusted to find the widest (worn) section of the valve guide. A micrometer is needed for accurate measurement of the small bore gauge and the valve stem. Subtract the valve stem diameter from the guide internal diameter and that is your clearance.



NOSE TO THE GRINDSTONE

There are several types of valve seat cutting tools available. Some are carbide cutters, some stones and others diamond covered. Each engine builder has his own ideas on what is best for each type of valve and valve seat material. Three angles (mentioned earlier) are cut using three separate tools, one after the other, to obtain the desired valve seat width and position. Cutting by hand is still the preferred method for motorcycles.



BAD SEAT

Although not from this engine, here is an image of a badly worn valve seat. Note the lack of the three angles! It is pretty much just one angle as well as pitted. This valve seat is beyond repair. By the time the seat is cut with three new angles, the valve would be too far recessed into the head. This would make adjusting the valve clearance difficult. It can, however, be replaced by a specialist head builder with the right equipment.
© Max Sullivan 2015



PRO TIME!


STORY AND PHOTOS DAMIEN ASHENHURST

Have you ever wondered how your bike would cope if you handed it over to a pro rider? Would they love it? Laugh at it? Destroy it?

I handed our YZ125 Enduro over to Josh Green for a day to get some shots and, I have to admit, I thought he'd be a total pro and get the job done and then hand it back so he could get back on his WR450F. We spent a couple of hours at his property getting some shots and it was impossible to miss the fact that he was having a tonne of fun on the little dinger. Josh isn't a subtle rider — he hits everything at 100 per cent and that suits riding a 125 perfectly. It took no time for him to get used to the bike and we were both impressed that the suspension work by Axis Motorsports, which made the ride more plush at my muppet pace, also held up well under Greeny's mental riding.

The day went so well that I offered to leave the bike with Josh for a while and he said yes without hesitation. You may have seen some of the videos he's posted and that we've put up on DIRT ACTION's Instagram of Josh riding the 125. You may have also seen that Dan Milner got on the YZ and gave it a run over a couple of days as well. So from a couple of hours of shooting photos to letting the best pro riders in Australia give it everything they've got for a few weeks, the YZ125 Enduro has definitely passed a rare test. It's also showed something surprising in that it appears far more versatile than I credited it for. I figured if it was set up for me then it would be terrible for someone like a pro rider and vice versa, but the YZ has performed brilliantly no matter who's been on it.

We'll be getting the bike back off Greeny before he hurts it but this has been a brilliant test to see just how tough and adaptable the bike is. It's also kind of cool that we all like the bike for the same reasons. That sound and the way it handles and bolts when you're on the pipe are both so addictive.

Now I've just gotta get the bike back! 

WE HANDED OUR YZ125 ENDURO OVER TO SOME OF THE FASTEST RIDERS ON THE PLANET... AND THEY DIDN'T GIVE IT BACK.





**FROM A COUPLE OF HOURS OF
SHOOTING PHOTOS TO LETTING
THE BEST PRO RIDERS IN
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- KTM SX65 HGS pipe and silencer **\$490**
- KTM SX85 HGS pipe and silencer **\$490**
- KTM SX125 HGS pipe and silencer **\$550**



2014 World Junior Championships
in Belgium. August.



Tye Jones, QLD 65cc Motocross Champion 2014



World Champion Caleb Grothues (centre) qualified for
Loretta Lynn's USA 2014 in the Mod 85cc class.



WORLD CHAMPION, Parramatta Racer
- Caleb Grothues, Mark - Dad and brother Brody.

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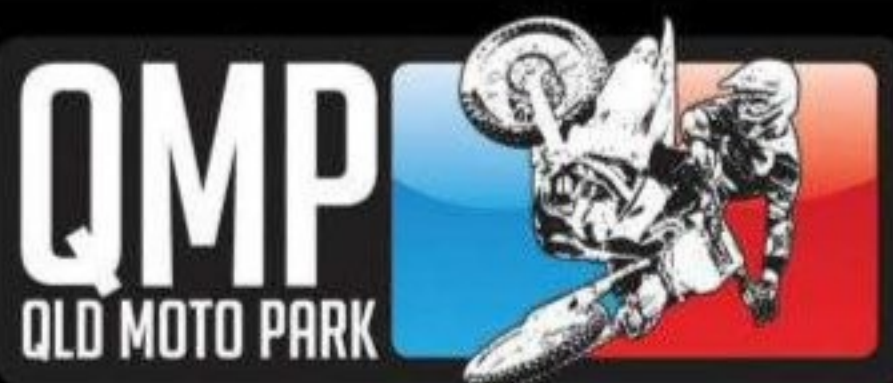
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